

THE INVISIBLE MIGHT

ROBERT BOWMAN



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BY
ROBERT BOWMAN



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I

THE soft greenish sheen of a Russian twilight was lingering in an upper room of the great Slavyanski Bazaar Hotel in Moscow on a spring evening in the year 188—. At a writing-table, which stood in front of one of the great windows reaching from the floor to the ceiling, a woman sat nervously fingering a pen. Twice she dipped the pen in ink, and each time laid it down without a word being written. Then a third time she took up the pen, and with a stifled sigh of desperate weariness began to write hurriedly—

“TO MONSIEUR PAUL ALEXANDRITCH
MARDOFF,

“*Dom Mardova,*

“*Petersburg.*

“Do not let the receipt of this disturb you with the fear of many letters. It is, however, right that you should know what I have done about the mine. M. Pallatin has recommended to me an English engineer, M. Forty, who called upon me here this morning; he is now on his way to London, but is returning immediately, and will come to Mardova in about six weeks' time to make an examination of the mine; he says such an ore could be readily sold.

“M. Pallatin thinks the Kazan wharfage should bring thirty thousand roubles; I have, therefore, instructed him to sell, and to be prepared for further sales should more money be needed. It is clearly understood that you shall not be called upon in any way.

“M. Pallatin also informed me of your

decision not to come to Mardova during my detention there. Though I feel sure this decision is a wise one, I regret it should have to debar you from your estate, as I likewise sincerely regret that I should be the means of affecting your standing with the Government or in any way imperiling your position. I can only hope that the Administrative Order will soon be relaxed; though, possibly, I shall be happier at Mardova than ever I have been in Petersburg. I also agree to your wish that discussion as to our future relations be left until this unhappy affair is over, but I feel you are right in believing me to be only a hindrance to your career; and I have no further doubt that our lives will be better apart. Never once in the whole ten years have we even approached to a sympathetic understanding of one another. If the fault has been mine, it has not been wilfully so; my desire has been otherwise; and the memory of the hopefulness with which I began our married

life only adds to the hopelessness of its ending.

“YELAINA GRIGOROVNA MARDOVA.”

She hesitatingly sealed up the letter, and sat gazing out at the fading light in the sky. A waiter brought in a tray of candles, two of which he placed lighted on her writing-table.

“You need not draw the curtains,” she said, “and will you please send my maid to me.”

“Liza,” she said, as the girl entered, “close the door and sit down, will you? I want to talk to you. No, not there,” as the girl was about to take a seat away back in the room, “sit here by the table. We are going down to Mardova, as you know, and I wanted to ask you whether you know just why I am going.”

“No, Yelaina Grigorovna—at least”—the girl hesitated.

“Don’t be afraid, Liza; I want you to know. I shall feel more comfortable, and

it is better that you should understand; besides, perhaps you have heard foolish stories from the other servants in Petersburg."

"If you please, Yelaina Grigorovna, they were saying—they were saying——" The girl grew confused.

"Never mind telling me what they said; the truth is this, Liza: I am being sent down to Mardova by an Administrative Order—but perhaps you do not know quite what that means—I am in disgrace with the Authorities."

"Yes, Yelaina Grigorovna."

"Some of my correspondence with the Countess Valletski came into the hands of the police—who took possession of her papers after her death. What they could find wrong in any of my letters I do not know—I do not understand. However, I am to be limited to our estate for the present summer, at least."

"Oh, Yelaina Grigorovna, how wicked of them—how dare they think it of you!"

“Oh, of course, they think they are acting right—but we need not discuss that. I wanted you to know in case you hear any talk while we are at Mardova.”

“No one had better say anything to me about it, my lady, I can tell them. But, oh, Yelaina Grigorovna, I am so sorry.”

“You are a good girl, Liza, but you need not be sorry, I shall have plenty to do. For one thing, I am hoping to have the old copper mines near the house opened up—the Englishman whom you saw here to-day is coming to see what can be done, and, perhaps, we may be able to find work for quite a number of our people before the winter begins.”

“Oh, that would indeed be good, Yelaina Grigorovna,” said the girl, with wide-open eyes.

“Now, if you will have this letter posted,” handing the maid the letter she had just written, “you may prepare me for bed; we must start for Nijni early to-morrow morning.”

“Yes, my lady; they say the Volga is now open and almost free of ice.”

Two mornings later the Volga lay glittering in the sun by the green-and-red roofs of the wharves at Nijni Novgorod, and stretching away through the level land to meet the haze-girt blue of the sky, while occasional smooth level patches amid the ripples showed where vestiges of ice yet lingered. Beyond the joy of the first greenery of spring is the thrill of breathing life which the first sight and scent of open water brings in a land where for six silent months earth and water are hidden beneath ice and snow.

On the white deck of the Oofa boat Yelaina Grigorovna stood watching these remnants float past to their dissolution. The feeling of being on the water was delightful after the discomfort of the long railway journey from Moscow, and she drew in deep breaths of air. The captain of the boat bowed obsequiously before her on his way to the wheel-house.

"See, how beautiful!" she said, as one of the floating patches paused an instant, swung round, and glittered like a table of diamonds in the sun.

"Yes, Yelaina Grigorovna, prettier there than under my floats; I fear I cannot promise you a quick passage with those about," he answered, adding: "Are we not to be honored by having Paul Alexandritch with us this time?"

"Paul Alexandritch is detained in Petersburg," she answered.

Presently they were out on the river, the engines causing barely a tremor of the boat as she was borne down the swift, rushing current. It was the evening of the following day, however, before they brought up at one of the long line of floating wharves at Kazan. There was much cargo to load and unload, the captain said, and they would not leave again till about midnight. So Yelaina placed a chair on the upper deck, and strained her sight to discern among the trees on the skyline the

roof of the house that used to be her father's, which she only left on her marriage; while up and down the gangways strings of dark-skinned, shaven Tartars passed, bent beneath heavy bales.

The gilded domes of the town flashed in the evening light, and as they faded tender lights crept swiftly into the sky, lingered there for an hour, and slowly faded into dusk, and lonely lights appeared far over the river. An Astrakhan boat, its towering, three-storied saloons gleaming white through the dusk, came alongside the next wharf—whither the bread and fruit sellers and hawkers of embroidered slippers and caps had hurried some while before, having discovered the approach of the boat long before it was visible to ordinary eyes. But the twilight softened all noise, and Yelaina Grigorovna's thoughts went back to her life in that house towards which her eyes had been vainly straining. How often from her room had she watched these lights on the river! And

now she was sitting here amid these very lights, with a foolish longing for those days to be back again; she thought of her father; of her mother she remembered little save one dreadful memory of an upright coffin-lid at the head of an open coffin with a still figure within, of lighted tapers, the deep-toned chanting of priests and the awe of a mysterious procession down the avenue, whither she knew not; all a strange, cold terror to her then, and a faint, distorted recollection to her since.

But ten years of married life shut off all those days; the contrast with her life in Petersburg made those childish years seem very beautiful and tender and, in their distance, almost heartbreaking. She was never disappointing then; she was always conscious of giving pleasure wherever she had gone; and when later she came to entertain her father's guests, she had been proud of his pride in her. And that foolish, happy day at the inspection of the Military School, when the Grand Duke

had said in his speech that he must congratulate Colonel Lityainyeff on his having given to Russia so gracious and beautiful a daughter. Of course, it was very foolish—but how proud her father had been, and on the drive home how he had held and patted her hand.

The Astrakhan boat began to move from the wharf, the boom of its steam-horn echoing and re-echoing over the water, and the lights from the great saloons flashing along the deck to where she sat. Soon there remained only a faint white path on the dusky waters, pointing to a vanishing light. The captain approached: "We shall be away within an hour," he said. "We have done better than I expected."

"I was not at all impatient," she answered him.

"No? Well, we shall be in the Kama shortly after midnight, I hope—and no ice, it is reported."

Then Liza brought a fur shooba, re-

marking that the night was chilly; but they had turned into the Kama and were beating up against the swift current before Yelaina Grigorovna went below.

The following day they overtook a steamer towing two heavy barges, whose decks were crowned with iron cages, within which crowds of men and women moved restlessly to and fro.

"*Aristantee*," said the captain. "Convicts—the first batch to go this season. Poor things!"

An hour or two later, while they were stopped at a wharf, the dreadful procession came up and brought to alongside. The sides of the cages were dense with clinging hands and white faces! The crowd of food hawkers on shore stood silent by their wares, while one young woman clambered over some boats and reached up a loaf of bread to a hand outstretched between the bars.

Yelaina sought out the captain. "Be good enough to take my compliments to

the officer in command," she said, "and say that I would be glad of his permission to offer some little things—food—to his prisoners." The request was readily granted, especially when it was known to be made by the wife of Paul Alexandritch Mardoff. Soon the contents of the hawkers' baskets were being handed up the side, and bread and fruit, bottles of milk and packets of cigarettes from the ship were clutched by struggling hands, whose owners were too eager to devour and smoke to heed whence the gifts came. Then the officer in charge appeared, with clanking sword and full uniform, to offer his thanks. "I have told them, madame," he said, saluting and bowing, "to whom they are indebted for this graciousness." Then he raised his hand as a signal, and a hoarse, muffled cheer came from the cages. "And yet I, too, am a prisoner!" thought Yelaina Grigovna, and went below until the barges were left far behind.

It was evening of the following day

when they reached Oofa, where the Mardoffski *pavoska* ¹ and *troika* ² were in waiting, with Anna Andreaovna, the housekeeper's daughter, to welcome her. It was a wonderful comfort to see the shy, heartfelt gladness on the girl's face, to recognize the horses and coachman, and to drive through the cool, green country the twenty versts to the house.

When Mardova was reached, however, and Varvara Stepanovna, the housekeeper, had met her on the steps and led her up to her rooms and stood waiting by the foot of the bed, Yelaina's eyes filled with tears, and putting her arms about the old woman's neck she fell to sobbing on her breast.

¹ *Pavoska*—a hooded traveling carriage, generally with poles in place of springs.

² *Troika*—the three horses by which the carriage is drawn.

II

THE house at Mardova was something of an architectural grief—an immense, white-washed stone oblong, with two long lines of windows, all of uniform pattern, save six, of later construction, in the upper row opening upon the iron balcony, which made a green line on the white of the façade. Immediately below the balcony was the main entrance, a plain arch through the wall, the door sunk deep in the masonry, and a flight of steps leading to the garden. The discomfort of the house, however, lay only in its outer appearance. Within were airy corridors, broad, shallow staircases and spacious, deep-windowed rooms, possessing the rare merit of always having the opposite temperature to that of the season. It stood on rising ground backed by a strip of

forest, looking down over miles of stretching steppe-land dotted here and there with lakelets—spots of silver in the springtime, almost invisible later on when summer hid them in deep grass. Over these in the season strings of wildfowl flighted against the evening sky, and the hum of insects went on day and night unheeding of the soft, far-away sunsets. Different sunsets from those of winter, when the fierce red overhead made the snow an expanse of billowy purple; when the stars came near, and the moon, in the intense cold, often shone out from a cross of silver.

In a hollow to the right lay the village, a long street of gray, wooden huts, well hidden, save for one or two of its roofs, from the master's house. To the left and behind the neck of forest was the hilly ground, where the old workings were; beyond this again stretched forest and field to the horizon, where the boundary lay. Not an acre of land had been either sold or mortgaged—a rare thing for a Russian es-

tate—during the present Monsieur Mardoff's time. He did not cherish any sentimental feelings in the matter—the land was simply inseparable from his house and dignity; and, though he rarely visited it, he managed it on the model plan of making the intendant's wage dependent on the yearly stream of roubles coming to Petersburg. So while lean years were not good for Paul Alexandritch, they were very much worse for Andrea Andreaitch, the intendant, and again very considerably worse indeed for the peasant.

But the system, as a means of maintaining and steadying the revenue, worked well for Paul Alexandritch, who was a gentleman with correct ambitions. He had been twice abroad on important diplomatic missions, and his name was now easily among the select in Petersburg. When he married Colonel Lityainyeff's daughter, the daughter of a simple governor of a Military School, he was quite aware that he could have bought in a

dearer and higher market; but his need had been for a beautiful head of his house, an attractive hostess for his guests. And his vanity was soothed as he heard his wife's grace and beauty spoken of on all sides, and his choice had received Imperial commendation.

For awhile Yelaina had found the life wonderfully pleasant, with its brilliancy and distinction and the sense of being liked and admired. But when, during the second year, tales of famine began to be told, she grew restless and wished to leave the wealth of Petersburg and be among the peasants at Mardova. Paul Alexandritch became impatient, and assured her that she could do nothing beyond what was already being done; moreover, he was going abroad on another mission. So Yelaina went to Mardova alone. She found her husband's words were true—she could do little. There was much to do, but she found herself helpless to do it; and her

eyes were opened. It was this summer that she met the Countess Valletski.

There must be many English people who knew St. Petersburg in the early 'eighties who remember the Countess Valletski; fewer, perhaps, who knew her writings, fewer still who know her history. They will remember her as a somewhat feeble old lady with white hair, remarkable brown eyes, soft and slow of speech, in whose *salle* they were sure of meeting other English people. They would hear of her as having a history; they would be quite unlikely, however, to be told of a September day in Kieve more than fifty years ago, when her husband was taken from her, of her years of pleading only to be told whether he was living or dead, of the unvarying answer that she might "consider herself a widow," and of her coming at last to welcome each sign of age as hastening that end through which alone she could hope to meet her husband.

Yelaina Grigorovna had met her at her father's house, and later the Countess spent a couple of months with her at Mardova. When, however, Paul Alexandritch returned in the autumn, he heard of the friendship with high displeasure, and requested his wife to discontinue it, for the Countess was known to be in ill-favor with the Government, if she was not, indeed, a suspect. Yelaina refused; Colonel Lityainyeff was called from Kazan, and affairs were smoothed over by her consenting to see the Countess no more, provided they were allowed to correspond. A couple of years of frigid peace followed, during the second of which Yelaina was called to Kazan to bid a last good-by to her father—to lay her wet cheek upon the rugged, dead hand and pray in her loneliness: "Take me too—let me come also."

The blow passed; outwardly, things went well, and Paul Alexandritch's name came to be among the powerful ones of Petersburg. Then one stern day he re-

turned home with pale, strained face and went straight to his wife's apartments. The Countess Valletski was dead: the police had gone through her papers and Yelaina's letters were found. They had seemed innocent enough in the writing; doubtless their color was heightened by the company of others of a different type; but Monsieur Mardoff was ordered to see that his wife kept strictly to her apartments. Yelaina, for awhile, was overcome with nervous terror; but when, two mornings later, Paul Alexandritch told her that she was ordered to go down to Mardova and hold herself detained there, and that he supposed when he returned in the evening she would be gone, she could reply almost cheerfully, "Yes, when you return in the evening I shall be gone." For it had already been arranged that she should spend the summer at Mardova, as Paul Alexandritch would be busy in Petersburg with the work of a new department; so, struggling against the suffocat-

ing sense of semi-imprisonment by telling herself that she was, after all, only carrying out her pre-arranged plans, she left Petersburg.

III

IT has been said that the old workings lay beyond the strip of forest behind the house at Mardova. Close to them, and in a semi-circular clearing of the forest, was the house set apart for the experts; and here on a morning in June came Jonathan Forty, driving the twenty versts from the boat-landing before the dew was off the grass. As his dusty *platyonka* jolted down the road past the old workings, which his keen eye at once detected, a peasant, working there, directed him to the little house in the clearing. After some knocking and strolling up and down the wooden verandah, a sleepy Tartar boy appeared and ushered him into a kind of dining-room, whose white-washed walls, yellow-painted floor and open windows under the shade of the verandah gave a sense of

pleasant coolness after the blinding road, which a couple of empty red-wine bottles, a streaky tumbler and an ash-tray full to overflowing of cigarette-ends could not quite destroy. At one end of the room an old table-piano stood open; behind the table was a heavy-looking divan, above which hung a rough bookshelf filled with books.

Jonathan had thrown off his dust-cloak and returned again to the room, when a stout old peasant woman appeared, trembling with half-awake excitement.

“Don’t distress yourself—it is I who am so early,” said he, in reply to her apologies for having slept so late.

“But the samovar shall be here on the instant, *barin*.”¹

“All right, I am in no hurry. I suppose Herr Kamff is asleep yet?”

“He still sleeps, *barin*—but he said he must be called whenever you arrived—he will be here on the instant.”

¹ Lord, master.

The old woman hurried away, and there followed some stealthy knocking at a door, and very shortly Herr Kamff appeared, hooking his gold spectacles behind his ears and smoothing his bushy black hair and grizzled beard as he came, for very few toilet moments sufficed for Herr Julius.

Seraphima kept her word; following Herr Julius came the Tartar boy bearing the samovar, and behind him Seraphima, with a dish of freshly-baked buns. Seraphima was an excellent cook; she was ready to prepare a meal at any time of the day or night; she always retired to rest without disrobing, and always kept her stove going.

For awhile Herr Julius was politely reserved, and spoke only in generalities; but Jonathan's easy openness of manner soon reassured him, and by the end of the meal he had grown enthusiastic over the possibilities of the copper mine. He began to speak in English, for Herr Julius was a little vain of his knowledge of languages;

besides, after a late night over the red wine, to show it served as an assurance that he was quite clear and collected in spite of the few white streaks about his face and the telltale shine of the eyes.

“I haf my laboratory here,” said he, pointing along a passage that led from the far end of the room. “If you will, I can at once show you my results.”

So they went to the laboratory, where liquids of every shade of blue stood in delicate glass beakers, and apparatus of every twist and convolution known to science lay about on shelves and bench and glistened in the sunlight, while the whole room had a curious chemical smell that was not unpleasant.

“I haf found,” said Herr Julius, handling one of the beakers of blue liquid, “what I think is der main lode—or, you would say, seam of der mine—you will say if I am right. But he is very hard—he took me der whole week to sample him.”

"Perhaps you had not a drill," suggested Jonathan.

"Yes, I haf a drill—but der rock he broke him; so I take a liddle hammer, und he broke him too. But," continued Herr Julius, tapping the beaker, "he is here now dissolved up in dis liddle pottle, and presently he shall tell us how much copper he haf."

Herr Julius took from a drawer a small cylinder of platinum foil, slipped it over a spiral of the same metal, carefully lowered the whole into the liquid in the beaker, and then attached to cylinder and spiral the wires from a couple of galvanic cells which stood on a shelf above. Whereupon the surface of the platinum cylinder began to be dulled with a salmon-colored coating of copper, and the blue of the solution began slowly to fade.

"He works good," said Herr Julius. "Now, when we return he will be ready."

"There is the fact; tell me the reason!"

said Jonathan, by way of showing interest in the operation, for though the process of analysis was familiar to him, he had been really interested in watching the German's deft manipulation.

Herr Julius took out his cigarette case as Jonathan lighted a cigar, and after a few puffs replied—

“Der are many facts which at present haf no reason for us. If a child try to learn der calculus, it will hurt him—as children hurt demselves mit pocket-knives! We must grow. In der meantime we are protected from too much knowledge all at once.”

“So that all our knowledge of to-day would not have been good for the old alchemists?”

“I am of opinion,” replied Herr Julius, “dot der alchemist had in many ways more wisdom than der scientist of to-day, though he had less knowledge. If a horse eat too many beans it is bad for him. Our scientist can easily eat too many

beans; perhaps dot is why he laugh at der alchemist."

"Not laugh; only sorry to think of lives having been wasted over a chimera."

"A chimera—der conversion of metals! Dot is where you are wrong. I laugh once—not now. See, if I wish to know if der is any iron is dis piece of rock, I dissolv him up and heat him before I apply my tests, because I know dot when he is hot he will answer my tests better; his character—his—his idiosyncrasies become more bronounced—his molecules move quicker—he is more alive—der hotter your tea der better he dissolve your sugar. But look now, if I cool him he becomes quieter; if I go on cooling him he becomes quieter still—his molecules go slow; if I cool him to the greatest cold we can broduce, he is almost dead, his individuality, his idiosyncrasies, are gone; he will not answer to my tests, so dot I do not know if he is iron. In a greater cold—in der perfect cold of space from where all dese things come—

his molecules, perhaps, are quite still—his characters gone—no more iron, no more gold, shust one uniform, elemental matter.”

“Still, that is only half-way in your defense of the alchemists. Having got everything into one uniform, elemental matter, as you say, by what laws are you to bring it back again, so much as iron, so much as gold, and so on?”

“Dot,” said Herr Julius, “is der child mit his calculus—we must grow.”

“Only in this case,” replied Jonathan, “we may hope the child will not come to learn his calculus. Well, if you are ready, we will go to the mine.”

The face, or faces of the workings, for there had been attempts to work at three different points, looked from a distance fairly promising, for from out its fringe of tangled briar and bracken the rock gleamed an intense blue; but on a nearer approach the deception was at once apparent. A seam of ore only an inch or two

in thickness about half-way up had, by the constant trickle of moisture, colored the whole surface of the rock beneath as blue as itself. Above this lay some eight or nine feet of dense gray rock.

"If only the seam had been nearer the surface it might have been worked; there is little hope of doing anything as it is, I fear," said Jonathan. "But let us see the seam you speak of."

They climbed to the top and plunged waist-high through the briar and bracken.

"Take care," said Herr Julius, "der is a hole—ah, der is Peotra—he help me to dig him out."

The peasant was awaiting by a deep hole, on either side of which a sinuous, ditch-like indentation of the ground stretched away beneath the tangle, evidently following a line of fault in the rock below. The hole had been dug between the two faces of the fault, exposing nine feet of sheer ore covered by only a foot of earth, while here and there were smaller

holes, for the sampling which had proved so fatal to Herr Julius' drill and hammer. Jonathan silently examined the place, a vertical line between his eyebrows showing his interest.

"I came to look for liddle snakes," said Herr Julius, "und one he run into a hole, so I dig him out and came on der rock."

Jonathan nodded, and on his hands and knees began to follow the line of fault beneath the brushwood. He returned in about half-an-hour well satisfied with his inspection.

"It seems capital," he said. "Where is the drill—can it not be repaired?"

Peotra produced it from beneath a bush, where it had been cast in despair; and though it proved too feeble an instrument for the work that was wanted, it was not beyond repair, so Peotra was dispatched with it to the smith's.

"I will wire to Moscow for a couple of drills and one or two other things to be sent without delay," said Jonathan.

“Koolic”—Koolic was the Tartar boy —“Koolic will take it to Oofa at once,” said Herr Julius. So they went down to the house to write the telegram, and Herr Julius to finish his analysis.

During the completion of the latter, Jonathan heard from Herr Julius how he had once been in London, and how, before he had been there a few hours, he had been robbed of all his money—about thirty pounds—by means of what Jonathan recognized as the old Confidence Trick. Then of how he had slept for some nights in the “Square of Trafalgar,” until he found employment in a sugar works; but not liking the place, he had left and gone to America, and finally had returned to Riga—his native place—and Petersburg.

“And how was it you came here?” asked Jonathan.

“Paul Alexandritch he came to me one day in der laboratory where I was—dot controlled der manufacture of paper for der currency—and say his wife need a

chemist to analyze some ores on his estate, and would I go?—he say some oder things too, for Paul Alexandritch is a very polite gentleman, but he wish me to go. I had been four years where I was, which was a long time, so I came. Haf you met Paul Alexandritch?”

“No, I have only met his wife. But that reminds me that I have not reported myself, and it is eleven o’clock. Will you take me?”

“In two moments I shall be finished, and den we shall go,” he replied, adding in a lower tone to himself as he closed his balance: “Yes, Paul Alexandritch is a diplomat—dot is Paul Alexandritch.”

After some rapid calculations in a little notebook, he looked up with triumph on his face.

“Dot ore has fifty-four and dree-quarters pro cents!” he said.

Jonathan had expected a figure somewhere near that, and he joined Herr Julius in congratulations on the result.

Then, after some change in their attire, they went to call upon Yelaina Grigovna.

IV

FIVE minutes' walk along a shady, resinous-smelling cart-track through the forest brought them to the house. Yelaina came to them at once, entering from behind a wall of palms and ferns that screened the far end of the great *salle* up to which they were shown. She had heard of Jonathan's arrival, she said, and feared he must have had a tedious journey. On the contrary, he assured her, the journey had been a very comfortable one; they had, however, to unship some cargo at one place before they could pass. Then the mine was mentioned, and Jonathan found himself becoming almost enthusiastic about its possibilities. He suggested that they begin to clear the ground at once, men might be put on tomorrow. Yelaina was delighted, the in-

tendant, she said, would give him what men he required—Herr Kamff would, perhaps, show him the way to his office?—it was the first house in the village; adding—

“You will not find our peasants very energetic, I fear; but really there is so little for them to do during a great part of the year—and they look upon poverty as part of their life; they are very gentle, though, and teachable.”

Then the folding-doors at one end of the room were pushed back, and a servant announced luncheon.

It was served in a small ante-room which, as only part of the house was opened, Yelaina used as a dining-room. At her left sat a thin, gray-haired, sad-looking woman, who was introduced as Varvara Stepanovna, the housekeeper; by the latter sat her daughter, Anna Andreaovna, the fair, rosy-cheeked girl who had met Yelaina at Oofa. And Jonathan noticed that Yelaina always included them

in the conversation, and addressed them rather as friends than dependents, often deferring to Varvara Stepanovna, and discussing little points with Anna Andraovna, who seemed to be a timid, shy girl. The conversation fell upon Russian wines, of which some bottles stood clustered in the center of the table. Herr Julius had been praising the Bessarabian wines.

“Yes!” said Yelaina. “I rarely take wine, so I am no judge, but every one says that it is good. Though in Petersburg, where they are never tired of praising it, they put French wines before their guests. It seems a little inconsistent, does it not?”

“Then der Crimean cognac der is no finer in der world!” said Herr Julius, looking up from his plate.

“An inconsistency not alone confined to Russia,” said Jonathan.

“But when there are so many beautiful things in Russia, why should we be ashamed of them?” she asked. “No—not

ashamed—for I know we love them; perhaps we are a little too sensitive to the opinion of others.”

“Dot beautiful gown you are wearing is of Russian lace, I think, Yelaina Grigovna,” said Herr Julius, who did not lack directness of speech.

“Yes,” she answered, raising her arm to show the lace, through which the beautiful lines of the limb were seen. “It was made by our own people here,” adding, with a smile: “But, you see, we are even speaking of these things in English and French.”

So the conversation was continued in Russian, and Anna Andreaovna asking one or two timid questions about the new seam, Yelaina said: “If you would like to see it, Anuta, we could go there after luncheon; I have not seen it yet.” So horses were ordered, and while they were being put in, the samovar was brought and Varvara Stepanovna made coffee at a little side-table, Herr Julius smoking his

cigarette beside her, while Yelaina and Anna Andreaovna settled by one of the open windows beside a pile of yellow-old music, which they were repairing. And Jonathan's gaze was divided between the wonderful panorama of sunlit waving grass starred with spots of silver, and the pretty curve of Yelaina's shoulders and the billowy abundance of her hair as she bent over her work.

Herr Julius said that he had work to do in the laboratory, so Jonathan was left to pioneer the ladies alone. Arrived at the mine—he and Peotra beating down a track through the brushwood—he explained how, perhaps, the best way to work the place would be to widen the rift of the fault and lay a tramway along it, by means of which the ore could be run down to the lower ground and stored ready for carting to the barges, adding: “We shall make a beginning to-morrow, I hope, if I can get the men.” To which Yelaina replied that they might drive round now by

the office and drop him at Andreaitch's door. So they returned to the *linaka*¹ and went back through the forest road, past the house and down a crumbling, sun-baked road, into the ravine, where they stopped before a painted and trimly-kept low, square house, having almost a palatial appearance beside the miserable-looking huts of the rest of the street.

Andrea Andreaitch, the intendant, was a little squat man with a pock-marked face, a bridgeless nose and—a fact which had been of the greatest service to him—honest-looking eyes. He was dressed in black cloth, and though he still retained the crinkly high boots of the peasant, wore them beneath immensely wide trousers turned up at the bottom and showing a band of coarse, gray lining. He rose from his office chair and greeted Jonathan with surprise, though he had heard of the afternoon visit to the mine, and had

¹ A carriage similar to an Irish jaunting car, but hung low on four wheels.

watched the *linaka* come down the road and stop at the door. He was delighted to hear such a good report of the mine, he said effusively; whatever men were required should be sent whenever they were wanted—to-morrow? yes, certainly, to-morrow morning.

“And one of my clerks will look after them,” he said; “we can pass them through the books along with the other men.”

“Thanks, but I believe it is Yelaina Grigorovna’s wish that this work should be kept apart from the estate accounts; so that we had better transfer, if you please,” said Jonathan.

“Certainly, certainly, whichever way you please—I was only wishful to avoid the trouble of two sets of books.”

And Andraitch became yet more nervously polite and effusive.

“We shall not be troubled with a great amount of book-keeping at first,” said Jonathan. “Then as to tools—barrows, spades, etc., I am afraid I shall have to

draw upon you for them until we can get our own."

"Whatever you wish—I shall be delighted! But let us discuss it over a glass of tea. Please honor me!"

And Andreatitch led the way into the next room, where his wife, Marya Ivanovna, was seated before the usual brass samovar. Marya Ivanovna was never long apart from her samovar, and was at her best when beside it. She was an exceedingly stout woman, almost unwieldy, whose beady eyes, flat face and dusky skin hinted at not very distant Tartar blood. She had, in fact, been one of the Mardova serfs, but was now a power in the land, and to fall under the ban of her displeasure was a misfortune not to be lightly incurred by her inferiors on the estate, or indeed in any of the surrounding villages. Both she and her husband expressed great concern that all the arrangements at the house in the clearing should be to Jonathan's liking; Yelaina Grigorovna had

given instructions that everything should be done for his comfort. If anything had been missed, or whatever he required, if he would only be so good as to mention it, it should be got at once—a messenger could be sent to Oofa at any time—night or day.

“And how did you leave Paul Alexandritch?” asked Andreaitch, pouring his tea into his saucer and stirring a spoonful of jam into it. “Did he send any message?”

“I came direct from London and did not pass through Petersburg,” replied Jonathan.

“Ah, of course, you had made all arrangements with him beforehand,” said Andreaitch.

“The arrangements were made in Moscow.”

“So? I had not heard of Paul Alexandritch having been in Moscow recently. But he is a very busy man.”

“I believe he is,” answered Jonathan shortly, feeling sure that Andreaitch knew all the details of his coming.

Marya Ivanovna pressed him to take some wild honey, a big dish of which stood on the table, but as she and her husband had been liberally helping themselves to it during the meal by transferring it with their teaspoons directly from the dish to their mouth, he refrained.

"We are very grateful that we are to have Yelaina Grigorovna with us this summer," said Marya Ivanovna. "Have you seen her yet?"

"Yelaina Grigorovna drove me here in her linaka just now," Jonathan replied.

Marya Ivanovna was quite unabashed, however.

"Did she?" she said. "Ah, Yelaina Grigorovna has a warm heart for the peasants, and for every one around her. We all love Yelaina Grigorovna!"

But Jonathan, having finished his glass of tea, rose to go.

"Andrushka," said Marya Ivanovna, after he was gone, "he is one of the clever sort!"

“Not too clever for me,” replied her husband, preparing to go out on his rounds. “Perhaps the fool thinks I don’t know!”

“I am not greatly prepossessed with your steward here,” said Jonathan to Herr Julius that night. “Does he trouble you much?”

“He came once,” replied Herr Julius, “and get me to play Russian songs while he sing dem; but, ach! his dam voice make me sick, so I pretend to go asleep, den he spit on der floor und go on his tiptoe from der house. No, he has not troubled me much. He is a clefer man, mind you, is Andraitch.”

V

HERR JULIUS' three months at Mardova had brought him among other things an excessive growth of hair; so—one day about a fortnight after Jonathan's arrival—he gave himself into the hands of Koolic, who said he had often cut hair. To sit wrapped around, all save one's head, with a bath-sheet, on a hot verandah where all kinds of buzzing things are, is not pleasant; but Herr Julius bore it with unwinking patience while Koolic labored with his scissors—brought from the kitchen where they were used for lamp-trimming—while Jonathan, from a shady corner, watched the process before deciding about submitting to it himself.

“One learns to appreciate many things in the country,” said he. “In town the full sense of rectitude which comes from having one's beard trimmed is lost by there

always being a barber in the next street."

"Der pleasures of civilization!" said Herr Julius, with his chin on his chest.

"Yes, only we miss half of them by their being so monotonously a matter of course."

"Not der fault of civilization!" muttered Herr Julius.

"I suppose not. But one is apt to forget what a deal a clean collar does for one's morality—one can almost forgive those peasants in their sweat and dirt and evil clothes their unbounded capacity for untruth," replied Jonathan lazily. It was one of those hot days compelling to idleness, making it pleasant to drift down all manner of little lanes of unprofitable speculation.

"Der Russian peasant," said Herr Julius, "thinks much of his pelly—und he is dirty, und, as you say, a liar, but I am fond of der peasant—he is always goot to der animals. He is a goot fellow."

"So good a fellow," said Jonathan,

jerking his chair further into the shade, "that one would be almost sorry to see him educated! He would be none the worse, though, for being a little crueller to a certain class of animals."

"Der liddle things?" replied Herr Julius. "He say Got made him as well as himself, why should he kill it? Dat is why when he find one he shust throw him on der floor."

"I once mentioned that fact to some of my countrymen, and they said, 'How shocking!'"

"One time," said Herr Julius, "I was in Naples, und there was a man mit a horse which was very weak—Koolic, dose scissors is surprisingly loose!—und a big sore on his back. Der man he kept beating him on der sore to make him go quick, so I ask what for he beat him on der sore—den he laugh und beat him again, so I take der stick und break him, und a lot of people came round—und I was put in prison for der night!"

“Why even in England,” said Jonathan, after sympathizing with Herr Julius’ misfortune, “not so very long ago, one might see at Christmastime a live fat ox stalled in the butchers’ shops, garlanded with paper flowers so that the passers-by might feed their eyes on their prospectice Christmas dinner. We have, perhaps, got beyond that now; still I think I have seen more cruelty in any one English town than in the whole of Russia.”

Koolic, with deep-breathing earnestness of purpose, maintained a steady tramp around Herr Julius; and Jonathan easily decided to defer his own haircutting until such time as he could ride into Oofa. The voices of peasants at work on a new store and weigh-house at the mine came down from the clearing, and the gleam of their axes flashed into the verandah. Down the dusty road past the workings came a messenger jolting along in a curious little two-wheeled cart, having its single seat perched

at the end of a short pole stuck, at an angle of forty-five degrees, into the axle-tree. He turned into the cart-track through the forest, as if going to the village.

"Looks like a post coming in," said Jonathan. And presently from the office came a clerk with newspapers and a message that the drills and other mining gear were lying at the wharf at Oofa.

"I will ride over and see about getting them sent on," said Jonathan. "Do you care to go?"

"Yes," replied Herr Julius, after a moment's consideration. "I am out of cyanide—und they would not give it to effery-body."

So that night Jonathan said to Yelaina Grigorovna—it was in the *salle* after supper and Herr Julius was at the piano swaying through Schubert's Serenade.

"Herr Julius and I are going to ride over to Oofa to-morrow; the things for the mine are there."

“Oh! You should start early, then—the heat will be dreadful later,” she replied.

“We shall start about six.”

“It is delightful then, Anna Andreaovna and I have been riding in the mornings lately, perhaps we may join you for a verst or two.”

“In that case we will wait for you.”

“No, don’t wait, for we may not go.”

“At any rate they will know at the stables, and if you are going we will wait,” said he.

The next morning when Jonathan and Herr Julius got down to the stables they found a gray half-bred Arab—brought a yearling from Colonel Lityainyeff’s stable at Kazan—being prepared for Yelaina, and a sturdy little animal—with the black stripes of the Vatyak strain down his back—ready saddled for Anna Andreaovna, while two other horses were being got ready for themselves—a high-peaked Cossack saddle on one, an English saddle,

rather ancient and mildewed, on the other.

It had only been after some consideration that Herr Julius had decided to ride instead of going packed round with pillows in a *pavoska*; but having decided upon riding, he had put on an immense pair of thigh-boots, which with his bushy beard and gold spectacles gave him somewhat the appearance of a benevolent highwayman. Presently, through a narrow doorway leading from the garden, came Yelaina followed by Anna Andreaovna. She wore a cream riding-gown of raw undressed silk, and in front of her drooping hat was a bunch of leaf-green color.

The road lay past the workings, then for about three versts through a wide forest road, emerging from which it skirted it for another three and finally, at the boundary of the estate, joined the Great Military Road to Oofa. A thin morning mist still lay in the forest road, slashed at intervals through openings in the trees with bars of

sunlight. The gray stretched his neck for a gallop, and presently Yelaina let him go, and Jonathan found that his bigger, heavier animal had hard work to keep its nose alongside the gray's flank. The others were left behind, though at intervals Herr Julius' voice could still be heard in the distance addressing stern words of rebuke to his horse. The pace soon brought them to the end of the forest road, where a peasant and his wife who were sitting by the roadside rose to open the gate and fall on their knees by the path.

"Get up—please get up!" called Yelaina to them as she passed.

"Their patriarchal idea of reverence," said Jonathan, as they steadied their horses to a walk.

"Yes. Oh, they are just like children," she answered—"great patient children; and with such strange ideas. You would have difficulty in finding one who could read or write. I suppose in England all the peasants are educated?"

“Well, you see, we have no peasants in the sense you mean, but what we have all possess some sort of education, that is, they can read and write.”

“And with us not three per cent.! Then there are no famines with you,” she said; “though I remember my father telling me that there are very many poor in your towns, and that they seemed to be more dreadfully wretched than even our peasants. But life altogether must be different in England.”

“Infinitely less restful,” replied Jonathan. “Here you still have the old patriarchal atmosphere, and time seems not to exist. With us time is of moment—or we like to pretend that it is. We rush our trains from town to town and send deputations to have them go still more quickly; our ships are built to race against time and we are proud of each second saved. Still, I have yet to meet the man to whom half-an-hour more or less on a journey would make any vital difference.”

"I should not like to be always in a hurry," said Yelaina.

"I am sure you would not—nor do we, always. One is only in a hurry until one is rich or the hope of being so is lost."

"But why do the English love riches so?"

"Do we? Not more than others, I think. Perhaps we make the getting of our riches more unnecessarily unpleasant than need be."

"Yet," answered Yelaina, "one always hears that the rich Englishman is very generous with his wealth."

"Perhaps it is something like this; our ancestry is still in us—we love hunting and shooting and fishing, and in England one must be rich to enjoy these things. Our silk-hatted business-man generally dreams of retiring to dwell amongst green fields and cattle, and he fights an uncommonly keen fight for his money. While he is fighting he is not always a very admirable

animal, but having got his wealth he is generally a generous one."

"Then," answered Yelaina thoughtfully, "in England one must be rich to have what here our poorest peasant enjoys for nothing? It seems strange!"

"Yes," replied Jonathan; "but perhaps things are more equal with us; there is less oppression—we are very proud of our political freedom, you know."

"Are you so very free in England?"

"Socially, no; politically, I think, yes."

"But what would our poor peasants do with political freedom? I sometimes think it is more—more religious freedom that we need. Politics!—somehow even the word sounds wrong—at any rate it is not yet for us—and yet——" She stopped suddenly: "There is the boundary of our estate," she went on, as a long line of trees became visible upon the skyline; "the Oofa high road is just behind."

They broke into a canter which soon

brought them to the heavily-hung gate that opened to the roadway.

Jonathan dismounted to open it, and waited for Yelaina to pass through. She remained with her horse's head in a line with the gate-posts, keeping the animal rigidly in hand.

"See," she said, pointing with her whip down to the roadway and speaking in a low voice, "see, I may not plant one hoof of my horse on that highway!—and there is all this beautiful country around us—and the sunshine—and——" Her voice broke into a stifled sob, and wheeling her horse she rode rapidly down the road whence they had come.

Jonathan, with a look of surprise, held the gate for a moment; then slowly let it swing to, and with the reins over his arm, stood leaning over it.

Herr Julius came jolting up alone, Anna Andreaovna having turned to follow Yelaina Grigorovna as she passed.

"What is wrong?" he inquired.

"I don't know," answered Jonathan. "Something seems to have disturbed Yelaina Grigorovna—what, I really don't know!"

"Der wass tears on her cheeks," said Herr Julius.

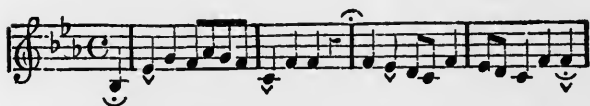
An hour's ride along the green and shady high road brought them to Oofa. Oofa is very like most other small Russian towns east of Moscow. Western civilization is sufficiently far off to be interesting and a thing to be eagerly imitated. The wonders of advancing science and discovery are much discussed there, and as the people still retain their faith in newspapers, interest in these things is stimulated by glorified illustrations in the meager journals which reach them from Petersburg and Moscow.

The town itself was quite uninteresting, and Jonathan and Herr Julius set about their business at once. The mining implements were found at the wharf

among a heterogenous mass of goods of all kinds—bales of tea sewn up in undressed sheepskins, bundles of Tartar slippers and fezes, piles of straw-packed bentwood furniture and cool arrays of giant watermelons. A couple of peasants contracted to cart the implements to Mardova; and while Herr Julius looked after his chemicals, Jonathan sought out a barber's. Then after a visit to the general store, they lunched—in a little garden overlooking the river—off a couple of immense veal cutlets, a slab of cheese, the remnants of a tin of sardines, and a bottle of red wine, followed by the samovar and tea. They lingered in the garden to rest their horses, so that it was evening before they reached Mardova, where Koolic, in freshly-ironed blouse, moved stolidly about the table upon which Seraphima had a well-cooked dinner spread.

Though they sat far into the still twilight which made the night, Herr Julius sporadically at the piano, Jonathan was

awake early next morning. His room was hot though the windows were open. Outside all was bathed in a sunlit haze. At the mine workmen were already busy, while from a softening distance came the sound of men's voices singing their work-song in unison as they dragged some heavy log through the forest. Jonathan lay for awhile listening to the song—always the same when heavy work was to be done, from end to end of Russia. From its fluctuations he could follow the progress of the work—a pause and an emphasized note when a pull altogether was required, the even roll of the notes when the log was following easily, a long pause while they rested, then the beginning again of the song—



Lightly dressing, he went out into the hum of insects, across the clearing and into

the forest at the side where, within a few hundred yards from the house, was a deep, tree-shaded pool made by the damming of the brook to maintain a supply of water in case of fire in the village or at the big house. It was a shapely, clean-skinned body that bared itself to the view of the trees as Jonathan took his plunge from the sluice-gates. There was coolness in the splashing of the water, and in the quivering shine of the pebbles beneath. Emerging with dead leaves and the seeds of last year's grasses clinging to his skin, he dressed fitfully and thoughtfully and, lighting a cigarette, sat down on the beam which extended on either side of the pool. And little islands and memorable places of the past came to him, while in the background there was always the incident of the previous morning's ride.

The post that came in a couple of days before had brought him a letter from home; he took it from his pocket—

*Kirkthorp Vicarage,
Durham,
May 20, 188—.*

“MY DEAR JONATHAN [it began],

“I find there is just time for me to write to you and catch this post in time, it should be, for you to get it before you start out into the wilderness once more.

“We are so interested in what you told us about this Madame Mardoff and her copper mines. We shall be quite anxious to know how they go on. Papa thinks it is just the thing that Uncle David would have interested himself in.

“We are going to lose Mr. Heddingly; he has got the Vicarage of —, Leeds, and is gone there to-day to make final arrangements. It is a parish that will just suit him—poor and lots of hard work—but it means another new curate worry for us. In connection with this I must tell you papa’s latest. The school children have subscribed to give Mr. Heddingly a revolving bookcase, and the other afternoon

when Captain and the Misses Butterby were over, papa began to tell them of it. 'You know,' he said, in his impressive way, 'it is really good of them—only the children, you know—they are going to give him a very large and handsome circulating library.' 'A circulating library!' said our guests in astonishment, 'really, how very curious!' I, of course, explained that it was a revolving bookcase that papa meant. However, he maintained that he was not very far wrong, 'because it really does circulate, you know.'

"Now do you know, sir, I think you very ungallant in so insisting upon my thirty years? I am not at all afraid of them; I enjoy them, and I rather think I shall enjoy being forty equally as well. But why insist so upon my present thirty? Were I a man, I am inclined to think I should choose my wife of forty. Therefore, sir, let us wait until I am forty, and you shall find what an excellent wife I will be. We are both of us much too sensible

to be lovesick; so I say—let us wait. Do you remember our once seeing a picture of the Romans leaving Britain, in which a British maiden sat with distraught look watching the boats that were to bear away her Roman? Well, were we to marry now, I should be ever playing the lone British maiden watching the departure of her Roman to unknown wilds. No, seriously, Jonathan, dear, we are both very comfortable as we are, in the meantime; and I think you really agree with me in this.

“Papa tells me to say that we could do with another supply of caviare—which means that you are to send some. Don’t forget. You did not say when you expect to be back; we suppose by the winter.

“Love and good-by from us both, and

“Believe me to be ever your affectionate
and sensible cousin,

“TERESA FORTY.”

When he returned to the house Herr

Julius had already satisfied the edge of his morning appetite, and was smoking a cigarette over his third glass of coffee.

VI

WITHIN half-an-hour after turning her horse's head from the highway, Yelaina had recovered her calmness. She was very far from being hysterical in the ordinary sense; but since her detention at Mardova there came times when she was somewhat overborne with a feeling of half-hysterical terror and suffocation—times of almost fierce longing to be a girl again with her father in Kazan; and wakeful nights of palpitating dread, when only the sound of servants stirring in the house made sleep possible. During the day these feelings were more easily thrown off—a change of room or occupation, a discussion with Varvara Stepanovna, or a walk or ride with Anna Andreevna would always bring back her usual calm content; and outwardly she was

cheerful, and no one, save, perhaps, Varvara Stepanovna, suspected these inner feelings. Therefore her momentary weakness at the highway was the more annoying; and a little dwelling upon it gave it power to distress her and make her angry and ashamed.

A night's thought brought a resolution. English people were contemptuous of any show of emotion, therefore it was most unfortunate that her one break-down had occurred before the Englishman—he should know the reason! She was aware that the cause of her stay alone at Mardova would be known on the estate and in the surrounding villages, but Ivan Daviditch¹—for convenience in speaking of him to servants and the workpeople the Russian mode of address had come to be used—would hardly be likely to know. The injustice of her detention cleared it of any idea of shame; yet to explain before others would be awkward, else there would be oppor-

¹ Literally, Jonathan, son of David.

tunity enough on the frequent evenings when he and Herr Kamff came to supper. She would make an opportunity on one of her afternoon drives of going round by the mine, when, if he were about, she could call him up and in a few words explain.

So a couple of afternoons later her *linaka* stopped by the workings. Jonathan was at work in a little hollow, superintending the placing of a blasting charge, when a workman told him that the *barinya* wished to speak with him. As he came up to the carriage Yelaina noticed what a graceful, well-knit figure he had in white shirt and trousers and white peaked cap, with the sunlight playing upon his short brown beard.

"I have been busy with one of the drills," he said, smilingly holding out a pair of oil-stained hands.

"Then I fear I have interrupted you—any time would have done," she said.

"No, I have finished. We are just ready to fire a shot; perhaps you would

like to watch it, Yelaina Grigorovna? You would be perfectly safe on the high ground above there. Let me take you."

"But what about the horses?"

"They can go further on. Drive on into the next hollow," he said to the coachman, as she alighted.

Conducting her to a table of greensward above, he called down some instructions to Peotra, who, feeling his mistress's eye upon him, became a man of importance, as in commanding tone he ordered the men into shelter and gesticulated with his lamp to insure it being noticed that he was the one to fire the charge. Then it came, with a muffled rumble and a cloud of dust, and the men sprang again into view from behind rocks and all manner of unseen sheltering places, while a piece of the rock was brought up for Yelaina's inspection.

"I wish Anna Andreaovna had been here," she said. "She generally comes with me, but she is busy this afternoon.

What a change in a few weeks! And how many men have you employed?"

"A little over fifty—fifty-two, I think."

"And when it is working full?"

"More than double that, certainly."

"So if it be arranged, as far as possible, to take one worker from each house, there will be at least a hundred households earning a steady wage. I have thought of this, and wished for it for so long—I am happy to see it at last going on!"

"Well, I think there need be no more fear of its not being a success," said Jonathan. "Every pood of ore that can be won before the rivers close is sold. I can assure you it is going to be a profitable undertaking."

They stood for awhile watching the men wheel the riven stone to the storeground near the weigh-house. The afternoon being very hot, Yelaina moved her sunshade to include Jonathan's head and neck. Below, Peotra was busy with some men by one of the drills.

“Do you notice,” she said, after awhile, “how Peotra always uses the English ‘Stop,’ when ordering his men to cease work?”

“Yes,” said Jonathan. “I find it is generally used throughout Russia where machinery is concerned.”

Then they spoke of the word “Podterbak,” used on all the Volga steamboats when sounding; the man in the bows calling out the word before laying aside the sounding-pole on finding a safe depth of water; the word being really a survival of the command, “Put her back,” used by the English captains who first navigated steamboats on the Volga. Then, the time being come to speak of what she had come about, Yelaina shrank from mentioning it, and instead asked if he had tried the shooting, and spoke of the wildfowl to be had on the steppe. They had moved across the bit of greensward to a gate in a light withe fence enclosing some cornland between the mine and the forest beyond, and

she now stood nervously with her hand on the hot bar of the gate. Then she said—

“Ivan Daviditch, did you not think it very strange of me leaving you so abruptly the other morning—the morning of our ride, I mean?”

“Yes, I think I did, for the moment,” he replied. “But I thought that perhaps you did not feel well—that the heat had upset you.”

“It was not that. I—— You have heard of the Countess Valletski, perhaps?”

“I knew her very slightly.”

“She is dead now, you know. We were correspondents—and some of my letters were found. There must have been something in them to displease the Administration, for I was sent down here to Mardova—and—and I may not go beyond the boundaries of the estate. And it was the knowledge of that which upset me on coming to the highway. Of course, it was very foolish of me——”

"I don't think it was at all foolish," Jonathan answered, looking away over the waving corn. "I think it was quite natural. I am sorry I should have been the cause of bringing the thing so unpleasantly before you."

"It was very, very foolish," she continued. "It is no punishment to be here—of all places Mardova is where I would wish to be—it is only the feeling of restraint which is at times a little dreadful."

"Very dreadful, I should think," said Jonathan slowly, still looking away across the corn and mechanically pulling handfuls of the tall grass that grew within the gate to wipe his oil-stained palms.

"But you must not think Russia such a terrible place; it is not, you know—nothing like what it is made out to be. Nowhere is the ordinary criminal treated so leniently as with us; why, you in England hang your murderers, while we practically have no death penalty. Our prisoners are sent to Siberia, yes, but they are so lightly

looked after that many of them escape! It is only the political prisoners who are treated harshly. And I fear their sufferings are dreadful indeed," she said sorrowfully.

Jonathan knew this to be true. Often during his visits to the Oorals, his camp fire had been sought by escaping convicts, who without exception, were all of the sordid type; not once had he met the refined political prisoner, of whom so much is heard.

"But it is dreadful," he began, "that you should be punished——"

"It is not punishment," she interrupted.

"Well—that you can be treated so for what must be so slight a cause. It could be possible nowhere but in Russia"

"Yes, Russia is different, I know," she replied. "And perhaps we are a strange people; I believe there is not one of the laws or customs of the rest of Europe that could be used by us without modification. A strange people—but to whom much is

possible! Just as to him whom the highest nobleness is possible is possible the deepest baseness; so with Russia; and so do we need governing, and so can we be noble. I know it and feel it all—even in my own body.” She placed her closed left hand upon her breast and went on enthusiastically: “To aid that infinite future nothing would be too great to give—death would be a delight, no martyrdom—but a delicious holiness of giving up to my greatest power. Yes, a strange people!” She paused, with shining eyes, while Jonathan said gently—

“When her people love her so, she cannot be other than great. I, too, believe in Russia’s future.”

“Yes, believe me, even her faults are but signs of what she can be. I sometimes think we are as Southerners born in a Northern land—full of contradictions. Oh, yes, there are times when I understand what one short day of perfect freedom would be—untrammelled by training

or knowledge—no future—only the present—with all its inherited instincts of life! Ah, I am talking wildly!” she said. “And how long we have been talking!”

She motioned to the coachman, who brought his horses up at a gallop. “Forgive me for keeping you so long from your work. Good-by!”

And the carriage wended its way down the road past the workings, and along the rough cart-track into the forest. And Jonathan turned to the gate and stood for a long while looking across the fields, where the summer heat was shimmering and the corn was ripening.

VII

ANDREA ANDREAITCH and Marya Ivanovna often sat long about their samovar of an evening. The way things were developing at the mine went a little beyond their calculations, and caused them much grave discussion. There were quite a number of households now who no longer showed their usual respectful humility in their presence. And Marya Ivanovna's brown fat face puckered in scorn as she gave her husband an account one evening of her visit to Sonika village, where Peotra lived. Peotra's wife had just returned from Oofa, where she had been buying new printed muslin gowns for her two daughters, and had shown these to her—Marya Ivanovna—with an air of no longer needing advice or permission before making so daring a pur-

chase, and had actually spoken of her daughters as "*barishnyee*." ¹ But Marya Ivanovna saw further than poor Peotra's wife. Why, these two foreigners spent almost every evening now at the Big House. She knew what that meant! Let them bide their time—she could bide hers! And Marya Ivanovna blew and sipped her tea and nodded her head wisely with half-closed eyes.

Andrea Andreaitch spat upon the floor and rubbed his mustache with the back of his hand. He saw even further than Marya Ivanovna, and knew more than he told her. He had listened lately to many stories from the "peasant fools" of all that this wonderful mine was to do. One village was to have a school where their children would be fed and clothed the year round; another believed that soon there would be no more taxes to pay; a third that the mine was to be wholly given over to them and managed by a village council.

¹ Young ladies.

Andrea Andreaitch listened to all and denied nothing, but rather, by his interest, encouraged the talk. He ostentatiously kept away from the mine, but little went on there that was not mentioned in his reports to Paul Alexandritch. His last report had spoken of a large quantity of ore having been sold, and hinted that if the mine were only under careful direction it might prove a source of considerable revenue. Immediately before receiving this report, Paul Alexandritch had been upon the point of ordering the mine to be closed; for, in spite of the influence which his new department gave him, he had more than an impression that his standing with his colleagues was not what it had been; and at the last Council of Ministers, while they were chatting before dispersing, he had been suddenly asked about the meaning of this new work at Mardova. He answered carelessly that it was only an ordinary development which had been contemplated a long time. But it made him

nervous. However, the prospect of increased revenue was not to be disregarded, for he had begun to increase his style of living, and, missing the helpful charm which his wife had cast about his social doings, meant to entertain yet more largely. He wished she had been detained anywhere but at Mardova, so that he could have made the separation yet more complete. The justice of her treatment was not questioned, her wrongdoing was evidenced by her punishment. However, he decided not to stop the mine in the meantime; especially as at any time he could take the working of it into his own hands. He therefore contented himself by writing directly to Jonathan, asking for a detailed report of things.

Jonathan showed the letter to Yelaina, who, flushing as she read it, asked him to send a complete report. This, accordingly, he did, mentioning at the end of it that he anticipated his further services would soon be unnecessary. For Jona-

than had of late been in considerable mental unrest and doubt, and his trouble was one in which philosophy is useless. It had become clear to him that he would be wise to push on the work and get away from Mardova as soon as possible. But there was yet much work to do—which he had engaged to do—and duty and inclination coinciding, while cold wisdom differed from both, he lost much of his usual decision and became hesitating and self-centered. In the meantime out on the steppe the hay was mown, and, under the shearing, the lakelets came into clear-cut view once more, and the corn was cut and stood on the land in drowsy sheaves.

Then one day in a letter from a mining firm in Petersburg casual mention was made of the separation between Monsieur and Madame Mardoff.

“I was not aware,” said he to Herr Julius, “that there was so complete an estrangement between Yelaina Grigovna and her husband.”

“So it is said in Petersburg; Paul Alexandritch seems to make no secret of it,” replied Herr Julius.

“I knew, of course, that there was some gossip, but I paid no heed to it. Is it a recent thing?”

“Since dis trouble mit der Administration. Paul Alexandritch is what you call a careful man.”

“I know nothing about him, though I almost wish I had left his letter unanswered.”

“I think,” replied Herr Julius, “it is better dot you answered it—better for Yelaina Grigorovna.”

“Perhaps so,” returned Jonathan.

But the news disturbed him; and though he now felt there was more need than ever of hurrying on with things at the mine, he could not settle to work; so in the afternoon he had Koolic’s old *platyonka* brought round, and set out for a night’s shooting on the steppe.

The steppe began immediately beyond

the village; so leaving Koolic with his *platyonka* to follow the track, Jonathan began to shoot his way through the marshy ground about the lagoons, where he got among the snipe at once—a fair sprinkling of them through a belt of about three miles; then beyond, duck and teal, but the latter so difficult of approach that after only three birds to twelve shots he decided to wait for the morning flighting. He had, however, done fairly well among the snipe.—twenty and a half brace to be placed in the *platyonka*—and Koolic, who had watched the sport from his seat, and in excitement been frequently constrained to pull off his rough, fingerless driving-glove and cock his turban at all manner of angles, fingered the birds with sporting keenness, and seemed to see in their plumpness further proof of Jonathan's skill; while the cream-colored Russian poodle, which Jonathan had but recently bought, squatted on his haunches and pantingly dropped silvery streaks of saliva

about his feet, keeping, the while, a bright look-out for further and impossible birds.

As the dusk began to fall a fire was lighted on a bit of higher ground, and the provision basket was brought out. By degrees scattered lights came out in the village, about four miles away, and a little later, higher and to the right, a brighter light, which could be only from the big house. Koolic, after a full meal, lay stretched beneath the *platyonka* smoking evil tobacco, while Jonathan, on a heap of hay brought from the stacks, which at dim distances stood around, prepared for sleep by attempting to read in an old Tauchnitz volume of Browning. But the flicker of the fire made it difficult to read, and after awhile he closed the book. He knew much of it by heart, and passages of it kept breaking in between his troubled thoughts. To-morrow was a holiday, and Yelaina Grigorovna with Varvara Stepanovna and some of the servants were to gather blackberries in the forest, and Herr Julius and

he were to join them there for luncheon. He would shoot his way in that direction in the morning, and get to the spot about midday. So—he would go straight from here to meet her!

“So is my spirit, as flesh with sin
Filled full, eaten out and in
With the face of her, the eyes of her,
The lips, the little chin, the stir
Of shadow round her mouth; and she——”

Well—after he had left the place and was back once more in England, the same far-off sunsets would fade over the steppe; the dim lights of Mardova would twinkle out as he had watched them do to-night; her light would be lit—and—— He wondered whether things at the mine could be got into train within another week—hardly—and what a long time a week was, and how terribly short!

He rose and walked slowly to and fro on the edge of the firelight. Soon the village was lost in darkness, and there remained only the light at the house. He

returned for a moment to the fire to throw on more logs, with the fanciful idea of keeping an answering light to hers away up there. He wondered whether she saw it! Yes, he must hurry to be gone.

In ten days' time—or at most a fortnight—Herr Julius could manage by then. He must get back to England—and then—and then——

“Who knows but the world may end to-night?”

“What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned,
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should abide.”

His walk brought him to the *platyonka*, and he stopped to touch the spoilt plumage of the birds—stiff and cold and unconscious of the night, their eyes closed to the clear stars. And he was the cause of it! but—was there not some stronger power which, with more lingering cruelty, sported so with us? He continued his walk, and presently the light at the house was gone, the space of the darkness grew

greater, and only the stars were left. He struck a match to look at his watch, but a night-puff extinguished the flame; however, he knew it must be near midnight.

That evening Yelaina sat with Anna Andreaovna in the *salle* over her needle-work. Through one of the half-opened French windows a yellow point of light could be seen down on the steppe.

"Herr Kamff said that Ivan Daviditch was away shooting," Anna Andreaovna remarked, "probably that is his fire."

"Yes? But that light is not more than three or four versts away," answered Yelaina.

Then Varvara Stepanovna came in about some household matter. As she was about to go, Yelaina said to her—

"Some one is camping on the steppe to-night. Did Andrea Andreaitch say they were going to net the lagoons this week?"

"No, not for another week yet," replied Varvara Stepanovna.

About ten o'clock Anna Andreaovna

grew sleepy and was dismissed for the night, and Yelaina settled to read. In the center of the narrow strip of night framed by the partially-open window, the point of light still burned. Her eyes kept wandering from her book to watch it. Presently she rose and stood looking out: all was soundless and still, and she passed out to the balcony.

Upon her return she moved her chair to face the lamp; but the scent of foliage and the coming and going of moths and other night-flying insects kept her in touch with the night without, while the open window, with its yellow star, was mirrored in the dark background of an opposite picture of Christ in the wilderness. The book gradually drooped to her lap, and her eyes gazed idly in front of her. At length, rising hurriedly, she went to the window and drew the curtains.

VIII

THE bramble-brake where the black-berrying was to be lay to the left of the house in the forest round the shoulder of a hill, about three versts away. It could be approached upon its western side from a little tongue of steppe that ran into the higher ground there.

The bay of forest—here of a lower growth—lay vivid with autumn tints as Jonathan approached it on the following noon. As the *platyonka* began to force its way up the over-grown track, progress was so slow that Jonathan pushed ahead on foot, grateful for the shade and the cool aroma; and half-an-hour's walk along the wider track on the level higher ground brought him to the little clearing where the luncheon was to be. A *linaka* and some *platyonkee* drawn up in the shade

told that the party had arrived, but with the exception of Varvara Stepanovna, who was busy about a little trestle-table, no one of them was to be seen.

"They are all away gathering—Herr Kamff also," said the housekeeper, as he greeted her. "But lunch is quite ready—no, thank you, there is nothing more to do, if only the samovar would boil."

So Jonathan sat in the shade and watched the drivers feed the big brass samovar with charcoal, while they chatted and smoked cigarettes hidden in their huge, shapeless hands from which hung their knotted-up whips. Varvara Stepanovna brought him a sparkling glass of home-brewed *braga*, and as she handed it to him, said—

"Yelaina Grigorovna showed me over the mine this morning as we passed. How the place is altered."

"Yes, it looks busy now, does it not?"

"Indeed, yes—very different from what I have known it all these years."

“And it will be still busier, I hope. I suppose you have known the place a long while, Varvara Stepanovna?”

“I was born within two versts from it—at Sonika,” replied Varvara.

“Sonika, that is Andrea Andreaitch’s village, is it not?” asked Jonathan.

“Yes, of course he was born a peasant; he was not always as he is now,” said Varvara, going across to see after the samovar.

Since his first coming to Mardova, Jonathan had liked the old woman for the tender motherliness which showed through her quiet deference to Yelaina; while the gentle sadness of her manner, with its suggestion of strength and endurance, attracted him; and now, as he watched her move about the table, he felt that the face beneath the black silk shawl, just allowing an inch or so of thick gray hair to be seen at brow and temples, was a face which had known suffering. He saw that she kept glancing at him. After awhile she

approached and said, somewhat nervously—

“Ivan Daviditch, about this mine; of course it is a good thing to see the work going on, but—I am not sure that, under the circumstances, Yelaina Grigorovna is wise in undertaking it.”

She was so nervous and hesitating in saying this, that to give her time Jonathan rose and brought her a chair before replying.

“In what way unwise?”

“It is difficult to say, but—you know the reason of her stay here at Mardova?” He nodded. “Well, I think it would have been wiser for her not to have begun the work at present. You know, Andrea Andreaitch does not like it!”

“But has Andrea Andreaitch anything to do with it?”

“Ivan Daviditch, I told you just now that I have lived all my life here—I have known three lords of Mardova—and I know that what Andrea Andreaitch does

not like is sure sooner or later to bring trouble. He is a strange man!"

"Do you mean that it would be better not to proceed with the work, then?"

"I dare not say that," returned Varvara anxiously.

"Besides," continued Jonathan, "Yelaina Grigorovna would hardly be likely to consent to that, would she?"

"No, no—perhaps I am only foolish!"

"I do not think you are foolish, Varvara Stepanovna," returned he. "You are anxious, and, I am sure, have some reason for what you say. I, too, would do anything to keep harm from Yelaina Grigorovna; and if there is danger in this business I would even advise her against going on with it."

"I fear it is too late for that," returned Varvara. "Besides, I am only house-keeper here—and I may be all wrong in what I fear." Then as the approach of the others could be heard through the trees, she said hurriedly: "At any rate,

Ivan Daviditch, always remember that Andrea Andreaitch does not like this work going on."

The comers were Yelaina and Marya Ivanovna, and Jonathan thought he had never seen the former look sweeter than as she entered the clearing and came glowing up to him to inquire about his sport. Always a lover of pretty frocks, she had not discarded one to-day, but had largely covered up the pretty thing by one of Varvara's big linen aprons, while loose linen sleeves protected her arms. Her fingertips were sticky, she said, so she could not shake hands. However, soap and water were produced, and the linen sleeves being drawn off, they sat down to await the others.

Marya Ivanovna, having greeted Jonathan with something of a scowl and cast a hurried glance over the table to assure herself of what the luncheon consisted, sat breathing heavily from out her stoutness, thoroughly exhausted with her morning's

work. Marya Ivanovna liked being asked to the annual blackberry gathering, for besides the share of fruit which went to her, it was something that the people saw her on friendly terms at the Big House and invited to sit at the same table.

Then Anna Andreaovna and Herr Julius appeared, with the servants in a chattering group behind; Herr Julius, who really disliked bodily exertion of any kind in hot weather, carrying a large basket of fruit.

"Yelaina Grigorovna," he exclaimed, mopping his face as he took his place at table, "dese expeditions are delightful—arcadian—but, ach, der day is hot!"

"Not too hot, I hope," answered Yelaina, smiling. "This weather is delightful—I like it hot enough to grumble about."

"Den I will not say it is too hot," replied Herr Julius, bowing. "It is ever goot in der woods!"

"Save when *claitchee*¹ attempt to eat one," said Anna Andreaovna demurely.

"Und even so! Der *claitch* he must eat, same as mens," said Herr Julius sentimentously.

"Though," returned Anna, "you took that one from my wrist very quickly."

"Oh, you are more fortunate than I," put in Yelaina, smiling. "I felt one in my shoulder, and though Marya Ivanovna blew on it for about half-an-hour, it is there still!"

"Perhaps you haf not used a blow-tube? A straw makes an excellent blow-tube," said Herr Julius.

"No, we had not a tube," answered Yelaina.

"Den let me try mit a tube," said he, rising.

"No, please no, Herr Kamff," exclaimed Yelaina. "I hardly feel it—it will do no harm for awhile."

¹ A flesh-boring insect. It may be removed by blowing upon it; otherwise a knife has to be used.

“Why not let him try,” said Jonathan. “It is not well to leave them too long.”

“No, but Varvara will get it cut when we return,” she answered quietly, smiling. “Ah, here is Andrea Andreaitch!” as the latter drove into the clearing in the smart little *platyonka* which he used on his rounds.

Andreaitch, with heels together, bowed low over Yelaina’s hand, and with another smiling bow for the rest of the party, took his seat at table. He had already eaten, he said, but would take a glass of tea. He took four, and drank them in a curious manner—sweetening each gulp separately by fixing a piece of sugar between his front teeth and drawing in his tea through it; when the piece became too friable it was crunched up and swallowed, and another supply was bitten from the lump by the side of his glass. While he drank he said little, but listened to the conversation.

Herr Julius, inspired by Jonathan’s bag, was explaining to Varvara Stepa-

novna a particular way of cooking snipe.

"Snipe," said Herr Julius, "is of all birds der most delicate, and his cookery should be equally delicate."

"You shall have some cooked in that way to-night—may he not, Varvara Stepanovna?" interrupted Yelaina, who had been listening to a conversation between Jonathan and Anna Andreaovna.

"Den, if you will allow, I will show der cook myself," replied Herr Julius gravely.

"It is difficult to say how much, but certainly many millions of poods," Jonathan was saying. "The seam extends in this direction, perhaps even beneath our feet—and might, quite likely, show itself somewhere on the slope to the steppe."

"That's just what it does do," said Andraitch.

"Of course it does," exclaimed Yelaina. "I remember now once having seen it—it surely is not far from where we were this morning!"

"It is in that direction," replied Andrea-

itch. "I should think about a verst from here—all overgrown with brambles, and if I remember aright there are signs of its once having been worked."

This was so interesting that it was decided to search for the spot after luncheon; and Andreaitch, after more directions about finding the place, took his leave, saying to Yelaina—

"I hope your news of Paul Alexandritch is good—that he is quite well?"

"Quite well, I believe," she answered quietly.

The servants had already gone off to the woods; Marya Ivanovna said she preferred to stay and help Varvara Stepanovna pack the dishes, so Yelaina and Anna Andreaovna, with Jonathan and Herr Julius, went in quest of the copper outcrop.

Yelaina felt sure that the spot lay to the right of the track; however, when once this was lost sight of, the slope of the ground was their only guide as to direction, and

they soon discovered that there are easier things than to find a given spot in an almost trackless wood. After an hour's search and many consultations, Herr Julius said he found blackberry-gathering easier work than exploration, and, the bushes being laden down with clustered fruit, lingered with Anna Andreaovna to fill the single basket they had brought; while Yelaina said they must only go a very little way further and then give up the search.

Soon, however, the ground became more rugged, great pieces of rock and boulders showing through the undergrowth; and presently Yelaina said she recognized the place. They had come upon a bit of level ground, and, just where the slope gave to the plateau, a mass of blue-crusted rock showed through the tangle, while a little further on a solid mass of the same projected like a buttress from the slope. After a brief examination, which showed no signs of the place ever having been

worked, they were passing round to the opposite side when, seizing Yelaina, who was leading, Jonathan hastily swung her behind him, as, with a growl, a mass of shaggy, mangy-looking hair, within a few feet of where she had been standing, reared itself up into a bear with pig-shaped snout and muzzle matted red with the juice of berries upon which it had been feeding. He knew what to expect; not the terrible hug spoken of in books, but one fierce, swift stroke of the paw which would bring the back of the skull and the scalp a curtain of crushed bone and ribbon over the eyes and chest. The one chance now, to await and, if possible, evade the stroke, then rush in and dig down through the thick hair upon the muscular throat and squeeze and throttle till one's own or the brute's life gave out. Without moving his eyes from the swaying mass of fur, he said in a tense voice—

“When I close with the brute—run!”

There was no answer.

The hooked claws were waving within three feet of his face, not outspread as if eager for the stroke, but close touching one another in a helpless-looking way, the second claw over-hanging and in front of the first.

"You must run as soon as I close—do you hear?" he said again; and again there was no answer. He dared not turn his head, so slipped a hand behind him to feel if she were there; and a hand met and closed about his own for an instant.

Then in a moment it was over. Keeping its little, pig-like eyes fixed on the intruders, the animal swayed its body to one side, dropped on all-fours, and went crashing through the brushwood.

Yelaina stood pale, her breath coming in quick short pants.

"You must sit down for awhile," said he, finding a seat for her on a boulder from which he tore the overgrowth.

"Thank you," she said tremulously, "I think I must have been very frightened,

though I did not know it at the time."

"Why did you not answer me?"

"Because I would not have obeyed you."

"You mean that you would not have run—that you would have stayed?"

"I have heard of a similar case—in which a man's life was saved by his comrade's getting behind the bear and plunging his fingers into its eyes. I was thinking of that."

"Meaning to attempt it?"

"I should have attempted it—yes."

"Yelaina Grigorovna, you—you would have been very foolish!" said Jonathan gently.

"Now let us get away from this dreadful place," she said quickly.

He assisted her to rise, but as he touched her arm she gave a little cry of pain and stood with lips pressed together, while a swallowing movement of the throat showed the effort to keep back further sounds.

"What is it?" he asked.

"My arm—it is stiff and—and painful. I am afraid it is the *claitch*!"

"You must have it out. This is only the beginning, the arm will soon be paralyzed if the thing is allowed to remain. Let me try to remove it."

He cut a stout, reed-like grass for a tube, while she slowly undid the collar of her dress. On the point of the shoulder was a round red patch with, in its center, a darker spot where the insect had entered.

"If necessary, cut it out," she said.

"If necessary, yes," he answered. "But we will first try what blowing will do."

Directing her to grasp her elbow as a support for her arm, he began his blowing, resting his hand upon her shoulder to steady the tube. Five minutes passed. Then she said—

"Ivan Daviditch, would you mind not saying anything about the bear when we get back? It would only alarm them."

"Certainly not, if you wish it," replied

he, pausing for a moment in the blowing.

"I think I do—I cannot quite explain why; it is perhaps like the reluctance one would feel in speaking of an answered prayer; during those few moments I prayed very earnestly in my heart."

"I think I understand," he said, without raising his head.

Another five minutes and the *claitch* began to move; a minute more it was so near the surface that he was able to jerk it clear.

She had been holding her handkerchief clenched in her hand. He took it and dabbled it in the water which trickled over the rock.

"This coppery water will act as an anti-septic as well as cooling the place," he said, folding the handkerchief into a pad for her shoulder.

"Thank you so much," she said gratefully. "Now let us get away from this place."

According to the law of retribution the snipe ought not to have been the success they were that evening, for, Herr Julius being inexorable as to detail, they had been cooked under the strain of much inward blasphemy on the part of the cook. But at the early lamp-lit supper, Herr Julius, though flushed with delight, pooh-poohed his laurels on the ground that chemistry and cookery are closely allied. Jonathan was brilliant; whatever subject came up his brain saw in some new and unexpected light; and jest and paradox and a hundred subtle flashes raced from his lips, while behind the hundred flashes a hundred devils wandered round his heart. The others caught his mood; all had something to say and said it well; so that when a lull came as they rose from the table, the merriment accentuated the silence and made them wonder what all the merriment had been about.

Varvara Stepanovna, who alone had not

been infected with the mood, departed upon some duty, and Jonathan remained behind to finish a cigar. When he entered the *salle* Herr Julius was at the piano; Anna Andreaovna had been called away, and Yelaina sat beyond the big lamp over some needlework. She greeted him with a smile as he took Anna's vacant chair. A post had come in while they were at supper, and among the letters was one from a smelting firm proposing a contract for ore over the following year.

"Arrange it as you think best," she said, as he mentioned it to her; "it is for you to decide."

"I think it should be accepted; but I feel it is not quite for me to decide," he replied. "This concerns next year's ore—and, you see, in about a fortnight's time I shall be going! All will be in order then, I hope."

"In a fortnight's time!" she said, stopping her work in surprise. "Why? I thought you would stay till the winter!"

"I am sorry I cannot do that," he answered.

"And however will things go on without you!"

"There is Herr Kamff!"

"Yes, I hope Herr Kamff will stay—but will he be able to manage?"

"Perfectly, so far as the technical work is concerned—I am perhaps not so sure of the business side—but if this contract be accepted there will be little of that to do."

"Then it must be accepted," she answered. "But—what a terrible responsibility it will seem when you are gone!"

He made no answer. Then resuming her needle she said—

"I suppose you could not stay a little longer?—the rivers are open till the end of October; you could leave by the last boat."

"I cannot!" he replied, so hotly that she turned quickly to look at him.

The exaltation of the long day spent in her presence was upon him, and after a pause he went on—

“Yelaina Grigorovna—I will tell you why I must go—it is because each moment longer that I stay makes more absolute the fact that every part of my being centers in yourself, longs for you—starves for you. It is all horribly and conventionally wrong to say this—though ethically it may not be such a crime—at any rate, it is true.”

She rose from her seat, with shrinking eyes. “Oh, don’t—please don’t!” she said, and hurriedly left the room.

As he heard the door closed he also rose and went over to the piano.

“Are you ready?” he said, putting his hand on Herr Julius’ shoulder. Herr Julius looked up, and after a glance round the room, closed the piano.

“Yes, I am ready—let us go,” said he.

Long after the household was asleep that night Yelaina, though prepared for bed, was restlessly awake and slowly pacing her room. After awhile she took a candle from the dressing-table and went

out into the corridor and on to the *salle*. Placing the candlestick on a small table just within the door, she made her way to her seat of a few hours before. She sat there without moving so long that the candle burnt out and left the room in darkness, save for the feeble glimmer of the tiny lamp hanging before the icon high up in the opposite corner. As this light came into prominence with the dying out of the candle, she rose and stood before it with hands clasped loosely in front of her; and the light which illumined the tender face within the shrine fell dimly upon her own upturned face and on the rippling fall of her hair. To Yelaina had come her temptation in the wilderness.

IX

A DREARY week of almost ceaseless rain followed, during which Jonathan worked hard at getting things into order. The little wharf which he had planned at the river was at length finished and ready for use next year; and from it one morning he watched the first cargo of ore steal away on its journey south. Then, as the two lumbering barges were lost behind the rain-dimmed bend of the river, he turned his horse for home, feeling that now he was free to go.

There were still many details which he would have liked to attend to, but these must be left to Herr Julius and Peotra; and as he watched the twitching ears and dripping mane of his horse as the animal splashed along through the mud, he composed a short note to Yelaina announcing his departure on the day after the next.

As he passed through the dining-room on his way to change his soaked clothing, he found a letter addressed to himself lying on the table. It was in a woman's writing, and could be only from her! and as he opened the envelope he braced himself for the verbal smite which he felt it would contain. It was written in English and, without preface, began—

“You must be aware that your words of the other night have disturbed me greatly—for I do not wrong you by thinking that you spoke them lightly. I wish to say something to you, but hardly know how to say it. Perhaps I ought to rebuke you, but I cannot. If your words were wrong, the wrong is half my own and I cannot regret them—perhaps, even among the many moods which a woman has, some stray hour may clothe them in almost tenderness. It is something which has been, something which has broken in upon the isolation of life, but something which must

never again be spoken of. To do so would be a bitter and useless degradation for us both and would leave you for ever dead to me. Knowing this, is it impossible that you should stay to finish your work? Do not write to me; to-morrow morning I shall be at church; if I see you there I will know that you stay; if not, that you leave by an early boat; in either case I beg you to remember always how grateful I am for what you have done here.

“YELAINA MARDOVA.”

After reading this note many times, and still holding it in his hand, he went on to his room; mechanically changed into dry garments; stood for awhile gazing from the window, and then sank into a chair and desperately buried his face in his hands.

The rain had passed away next morning as he walked over to Sonika, and the pools of last night's rain were sheets of glittering ice in the yellow sunlight; the dead leaves under foot curled and white

with frost; the white-washed walls and green-painted domes of the church as he approached it set against a deep blue sky. Pushing open the great padded door—a shaft of mist preceding him as the frosty air without cut into the heated air within—he moved quietly up the church and stood in the rear of the group of worshipers—mostly peasants, the smell of whose garments mingled heavily with the odor of half-extinguished tapers and the faint smell of incense. But he knew she was there, for her carriage waited outside. Then he saw her higher up the church on one side, kneeling and almost hidden by a group of peasants. The deep voice of the priest filled the church; the shrine-hung walls held their mystery; and, the spirit of prayer in his heart, Jonathan knelt with bowed head.

He was the first to leave when the service was over, and stood by her carriage waiting for her coming, for he fancied that she had not seen him. Ivan, the coach-

man, looked at the sky and thought there would be some good frosts now, the geese had been noisy and flying much of late and that always meant frost, he knew. The pair of blacks pranced as they sniffed the keen air. "Father and son," said Ivan, pointing to them with the whip slung from his wrist. He had broken the young one in himself—was he not a beauty? Jonathan smoothed the firm black legs and slapped the shining shoulders that quivered into little ridges at his touch.

At length, almost the last, she came, her breath showing in the frosty sunlight as fleeting wisps of silver mist. She had seen him in the church, she said. What a lovely morning! Might she drive him back? But Jonathan, thanking her, said he would walk; so having watched the carriage depart down the village street—the peasants standing bare-headed as it passed—he followed on foot.

The holiday faces and garments of the peasants as they stood about in groups

gave the street quite a cheery appearance, and as many of them worked in the mine, Jonathan stopped for a word with them as he passed. There was, he thought, something very lovable about these simple people who, in spite of years of poverty, suffering and sameness, could be so happy and light-hearted. The whole village rang with their holiday laughter, happiness for the time was theirs; a pocketful of black sunflower seeds bought for a single *kopeck* formed their holiday feast!

Leaving the village he turned out of the direct path and lingered to watch the movements of a jack-hare that had stolen from the forest into a field of autumn-sown grain. He saw that the creature's summer coat of russet had almost changed to its winter white—a sure sign that winter was near. As for that field of fresh young green, he could almost envy it, for it would see the spring at Mardova! At Kirkthorp the sea would be sounding in through the open windows of the Vicar-

age, the day just beginning, Uncle Phineas and Ressay perhaps at breakfast; and a grateful feeling of rest came with the thought of the English Vicarage.

As he drew near Mardova and came down the slope of the ravine, the House, beyond the opposite bank, came into full view. Though it was a good half-verst away the clear air allowed things to be seen very distinctly, and he stopped suddenly to steady his gaze, for on the lawn before the house was a great mass of peasants, while on the steps of the main entrance stood Yelaina dressed just as she had been at church—in a dress and coat of green edged with sable and with a hat of the same fur. She was bending forward, evidently speaking to the people; then while he gazed Varvara Stepanovna came quickly from out the doorway, took her by the arm and led, almost dragged her, he thought, back into the hall and closed the door.

Leaving the zigzag path he took a di-

rect line down the slope and hurried towards the house. Though his thoughts were uneasily occupied with what he had just seen, he was not too absorbed to notice as a curious circumstance that a peasant whom he met coming down the opposite hill should bear about with him the dainty odor of a scent which had been fashionable in Petersburg a couple of years before.

X

WHAT had happened was this. Upon driving into the courtyard on her return from church, Yelaina had found Andrea Andreaitch awaiting her. He had come, he said, to report that for the past few days there had been considerable excitement among the peasants owing to a rumor having got about that the mine was to be closed, and that they were now coming to her in a body to ask that the work might still go on.

“But I do not wish to see them,” said Yelaina. “Tell them that the mine will not be closed; that there will be work for them all through the winter.”

“I have told them that,” answered Andreaitch, “but it is no use, they have got the idea into their heads—you had better see them, Yelaina Grigorovna. A word from you will quieten them.”

"Well—let them come, then," she said.

So with a low bow Andreaitch departed, and Yelaina sauntered into the great stable-sheds, where, it being a holiday, long lines of horses, some two hundred or more, were luxuriantly munching and stamping. Fanassi, the horsekeeper, obsequiously followed her between the rows of whisking tails, while round-eyed helpers watched them from a distance. The lazy holiday air and content of the horses gave her a feeling of happiness and soothed the slight irritation which Andreaitch's visit had caused. Returning to the house she met Varvara Stepanovna at the foot of the great stairs and told her of the coming deputation. Varvara looked troubled.

"Do not see them, Yelaina Grigorovna," she said. "There is no need for it! Please, Yelaina Grigorovna, do not see them."

"Oh, I will see them," Yelaina answered. "A few words will reassure

them." Then, by an impulse, she kissed the old woman and went her way upstairs, idly swinging her gloves.

Liza was awaiting her mistress with round-eyed wonder.

"*Bozhi moi*,¹ what is this, Yelaina Grigorovna? See!" she cried, pointing from the window. And Yelaina, looking, saw that the peasants had already arrived and were congregated, a great gray mass, on the lawn beneath; so without waiting for Liza's orders, she descended to the main corridor and passed out to the stone steps in front of the house facing the crowd.

Two hundred upturned faces confronted her, for not only the immediate workmen at the mine were there but many others had come to show themselves and add the encouragement of their presence; and her flower-beds which she had such pleasure in making in the spring were hidden beneath trampling feet and the last of the flowers broken and crushed.

¹ My God!

Dull ignorance, poverty, dirt and disease was on most of the upturned faces; that smallpox was common and virulent amongst them was shown by the number of leaden-hued and pitted features; as the frequency of the bridgeless nose and pointed teeth set wide apart told of generations of immorality. Among them all there was not more than a dozen with signs of ruddy health, and even fewer had faces of real intelligence. A curious faint odor coming in wafts from them was increased by their movements. On Yelaina's appearance their chatter was immediately hushed; while those in front fell upon their knees, some even with their faces to the ground.

"Get up from your knees!" she commanded, "I will not listen to you so! Why should you kneel to me?"

The kneelers paused a moment, then, cap in hand, sheepishly arose, looking from one to the other. Another pause, and Simion Gavreelitch, who had been

doing blacksmith work at the mine, took a hesitating step forward and after a nervous glance to right and left, began in a quivering monotone to deliver the petition.

“Barinya, we have come to you because we hear you are soon to leave us—and we are afraid, and do not know what will be with us. For it is good when you are here, and, Little Mother, the bread you give us is good bread, but though our Little Father¹ loves us and gives us gifts, and his bread we hear is good bread, it comes through many hands, and his corn when it reaches us is not corn but sand and stones, and we cannot make it into bread!—and the winter is near and the land will not feed us though it costs us dear. So, Barinya, do not close the mine, or please, if it wearies you, leave us to work it for ourselves. We will elect a council, with Peotra Nikoolin as head; so we shall have work to do and bread to eat! Please! We pray you, Barinya!”

¹ Tsar.

He finished, again looked round for approval, furtively scratched his brow, and fell back to his place. There was no applause; but the feeling seemed to be that he had spoken well.

For awhile Yelaina made no reply. The pathos, the almost tragedy of this groping sample of her country's gray millions was working within her. She took her handkerchief from her muff and pressed it to her lips. By the open gate, through which the people had come, Andraitch was standing; beyond him, in the outer garden, was an individual, a stranger to her, who from his dress evidently belonged to the better class of peasants or the humble merchant class. Near the front of the crowd stood a tall lean peasant holding in his arms, shoulder high, a child of about six or seven with a small pinched face and scarred sightless eyes. The little fellow, groping about for something to lay hold of, had lighted on its father's ear, the great lobe of which he had

clutched in his small right hand, while in the other he held the midrib of a raw cabbage-leaf, which from time to time he gnawed and sucked at. Yelaina motioned the father to her, and, taking the child from his arms, pityingly stroked the small face. She asked the cause of its blindness, its name and age, while her face flushed with pity as she bent over the shrunken little thing. The assemblage, however, waiting for her to speak, began to sway uneasily, so, her heart quieter now, she gave the child back to its father, and raising her head addressed the people. She spoke of them as her "brothers," and used the simplest words; but while her voice was clear and modulated so that all might hear, there was an under quiver of excitement in it. She told them to put their minds at rest; that though she might go from them the mine would not be closed; that she hoped next year there would be work for double their present

number. Though she wished to help them she also wished them to help themselves, and not spend so much at the *kabak*.¹ "For it is not right that you should ever go hungry and see your children starve," she said earnestly, "for you, my brothers, are the strength and life and hope of Russia, and she is proud of you, even though at times she forgets. Whatever our country may be in the future can come only from you—never forget that! And though you suffer—no, I will not say be patient, for you are patient—I will say, in your suffering help one another, help those who are poorer even than yourselves, and remember always that our Most High Emperor loves you and is sad when you are hungry. As for those who steal your bread—they are murderers, and must surely be scourged from the land!"

It was at this moment that Varvara Stepanovna, who had been watching from

¹ Vodka shop.

the doorway, moved quickly out, seized Yelaina by the arm, and whispering hurriedly in a terrified voice—

“Yelaina Grigorovna, say no more—my little pigeon, say no more!” dragged her within the doorway and forced her down upon a mat-covered chest which stood at one side of the hall. And before Yelaina, who was pale and trembling, could recover herself, she was out on the steps again facing the crowd with the door held closed behind her.

“Your mistress is not well to-day,” she said, straining her voice till its thin notes broke, “but she assures you again that the mine will not be closed, and now asks you all, please, to go quietly away!”

With cap awry and her gray hair disordered she waited till the people began to move before she left the steps; then finding that Yelaina had gone up to her room with Anna Andreaovna, she followed, and falling on her knees distressfully took her hands in her own.

"Yelaina Grigorovna—Yelaina Grigorovna," she cried, "why did you speak to them—oh, why did you speak to them? God knows what will come of this day!"

Yelaina, however, smiled at her fears. The peasants had come to ask about the mine and she had reassured them—that was all; what harm could there be in speaking to their own people? And she fell to soothing and petting the old woman.

By this time Jonathan had got up to the house, and finding no one below who could tell him anything, had made his way to the *salle*, where Anna Andreaovna, hearing his footsteps, came to him and told him what had occurred, and of Yelaina's words.

"And you say that your mother is alarmed and distressed at this?" said he.

"Indeed, yes, Ivan Daviditch, we are all afraid!" answered Anna Andreaovna, who was pale and trembling.

"Well—it may be," said he thought-

fully. "At all events I wish I had been here to speak to them myself."

So bidding her good-by, he went slowly across to the clearing, where he found Herr Julius, in spite of the holiday, busy at work in the laboratory. But Herr Julius also took a serious view of the matter, and with grave face put down his test-glass and slowly lighted a cigarette as he listened.

"And I have an uneasy feeling," said Jonathan, "that that fellow Andraitch is somehow mixed up in this!"

"Maybe," said Herr Julius.

"Still, the words seem simple and innocent enough—at least they would be so in any other country," said Jonathan.

"Maybe," said Herr Julius again.

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Jonathan, somewhat impatiently; "but look here, you know Russia better than I do, do you see any harm in them?"

"I would giff," said Herr Julius, "ten years of my life had our Yelaina Grigor-

ovna not spoken dem! Andreaitch, Andreaitch, I fear you are a douple deffil!"

Meanwhile Andreaitch had gone down to his house and was giving a close account to Marya Ivanovna of all that had occurred.

"It all happened as it should," said he. "The Administration will have it next week—then we shall see!"

"*Slava Bogo!*"¹ said Marya Ivanovna.

¹ Glory be to God.

XI

MEANWHILE the light frost held, and bird and beast gave sign of an early winter. While yet the soft-leaved trees flamed in scarlet, the firs glittered with a fresher green, the starlings went south and the tits came closer about the house. The days were brilliant, and upon one such morning their daily walk brought Yelaina and Anna Andreaovna out upon the Oofa forest road. In the shade of the trees the accumulated hoarfrost told many secrets of the night; a succession of oblong scrapes showed a hare's returning track to his sheltering bush; a line of tiny dots around a tussock of grass, the shy hurry of a field-mouse, while in and out between the bushes countless footprints of birds lay in white intaglio. Yelaina and Anna had paused before a

tiny disorder of feathers near a speck of red upon the white, in wondering pity at the teeming tragedies of the forest night, when the measured beat of bells came down the straight-cut road, and between the distant line of trees a rapidly moving *pavostia* appeared. They stood beneath the trees to watch it draw near, Anuta silent and trembling as if with cold.

“Why, it is Kireel Paulitch and—and little Vanooshka!” exclaimed Yelaina, as the carriage drew up beside them and a tall, grave man, wearing a long camel’s-hair cloak, alighted to greet them. “Welcome, welcome Kireel Paulitch—and little Vanooshka too—why, Vanooshka, this is capital!” she cried, approaching the carriage, where a delicate-looking boy of about twelve, wearing the ill-fitting uniform of the real school, sat bareheaded and undecided; at his previous visit to Mardova he had been kissed by Yelaina, but now the dignity of two more years had to be added; but, as Yelaina’s face was up-

turned for it, he shyly bent and gave the kiss.

“And when did you return from Jerusalem?” Yelaina asked of the tall man, as they turned their steps towards the house.

“But yesterday,” was the reply.

Kireel Paulitch Bareetsa was one of a not uncommon type in Russia. His father, lacking the means to support it, had dropped his title of Prince, and dying, had left to his son the remnant of the lands of his ancestors and all the turbulence of blood which had made those ancestors foremost of their day in breaking the Tartar hoards on the plains of Kazan. For years Bareetsa's one pleasure seemed to lay in exhausting himself and his inheritance as completely as possible. Many a frosty sky heard the shout of drunken laughter from the black dot on the plain, which marked the village where he and his peasant companions caroused; as many a Moscow midnight had watched his more chastened revels; and from a Moscow

dancing-girl had his son, little Vanooshka, been born. From such a course the future holds for the Slav but one of two things—yet deeper animalism or a pensive asceticism. In Bareetsa's case it was the latter. During the summer which the Countess Valletski spent at Mardova, she, having known his father, sought him out and found him ill and languid in his house at Oofa; alone, save for the attendance of a grizzled old coachman and a shaven-headed Tartar boy—the faithful remnant of his servants. First she roused him by laughing at his talk of death in expiation, and, finally, to complete the cure, induced him to visit at Mardova, where Yelaina welcomed the now somewhat taciturn man with a friendliness that covered a woman's understanding pity. During succeeding summers he continued his visits, and latterly had extended them into the winter, when there remained at the house only Varvara Stepanovna and Anuta to hand him his glass of tea; until one December

afternoon he had almost spoken the words which Anuta's heart ached to hear. But the words remained unspoken, and a few weeks later it was known that he had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Varvara Stepanovna, looking up from her occupation of threading strings of mushrooms to dry for winter store, saw the group emerge from the forest, and seeing Bareetsa, she paused in her work, and fell to thinking once again of the long-passed, great, over-shadowing event in her life. In keenness of feeling it was almost as near to her now as in the years it had happened. Again she felt the silence which followed her father's departure to the monastery in Kieve, which had hidden and lost him to her; again she was come a shy-faced girl to the great house; again followed the flushed and breathless year in which her child was born—the memory made her breathless even yet. But Varvara, sitting motionless by the window, could pray for blessings upon the soul of

Alexander Mardoff, who within a month of his child's christening, at which Andreaitch had been called in to lend his name, had lain dead in his house.

These memories, never wholly absent from Varvara, came closer to her to-day as the sight of Bareetsa brought thoughts of a day when her child might leave her. Through all these years Varvara had so lived within herself that she imagined few without the immediate household knew anything of her story. Thus, when during the previous winter she saw signs of an attachment between Bareetsa and her daughter, it took many days and nights to brace herself to the explanation which she felt must be made before anything definite was allowed to happen. It was of this she was thinking as once more she bent herself over the mushroom strings, and as, the last being threaded, she arranged them in festoons from hooks beneath the cupboard shelves.

Upon entering the courtyard Anuta

had left the others and gone indoors, and Yelaina, being occupied under Vanooshka's tuition over the manifold points of a litter of puppies, Bareetsa had followed, and finding Anuta in her mother's room, stood before her with a tiny box of cedarwood held open in his hand. Within the box lay a small coil of withered grass, a golden-tinted cedar-cone, and a small mother-of-pearl cross set with precious stones—mementoes from the Holy Land.

"I have brought these for you," he said; "the grass I gathered in Gethsemane; the cedar-cone is from Lebanon; the cross I bought in Jerusalem;" he paused for a moment before continuing. "It was in Jerusalem at last where I found that forgiveness which lets me stand before you now to ask you to be my wife!"

For answer Anuta, with trembling hands, took the box and reverently kissed it. And when later in the day Varvara called Bareetsa to her room and with trembling heart prepared to make her ex-

planation, he stopped her. "I know," said he, and, bending, kissed her hand.

Meanwhile Yelaina, after manfully striving to fix in her mind the points about puppies necessary to remember, had become hopelessly confused over them. "Vanooshka," she said, "I had no idea that there were so many points to remember about puppies! What do you say if we ask your father to leave you here for a whole week, then, you see, you could teach me just a little each morning? I am quite sure that I should remember it all then—a little each morning, you know!"

Vanooshka sighed and thought it would be capital; so he was conveyed within doors to obtain consent to the plan.

Yelaina had long since guessed how matters were going, and now behind her invitation lay the thought of throwing Vanooshka and Anuta together for awhile. Bareetsa, seeing this, consented at once—he would bring Vanooshka's bag over himself next day, when he was to

bring Claudia Paulovna, his sister, to be introduced.

Claudia Paulovna, though Bareetsa's elder by some years, was in preservation so far younger that during the two years of her widowhood, during which she had lived in Oofa, she had easily attracted to herself the leading doctor of the town, a man of somewhat pretentious appearance, with a large family and an ailing wife. As Claudia Paulovna took her *aime* along with her wherever she went, it followed that the next day Doctor Solomin made one of the guests. Jonathan and Herr Julius were also included in the luncheon party, but the latter was allowed to go alone, Jonathan having found it necessary to visit the wharf that afternoon—a final inspection, he said. However, he was not allowed to enjoy his sense of rectitude for long; for he had barely finished his meal preparatory to starting—and was yet far from having conquered the pangs of regret at having thrown away another of the

few now remaining opportunities of being near Yelaina—when a scrawl from Herr Julius was handed to him. “I fear there are some bad news to come,” it said. Bad news could but refer to one thing just now, so sending his horse back to the stable Jonathan went over to the house. In the hall the sound of laughing voices from above-stairs guided him to the *salle*.

“Thanks for having changed your mind—I am glad your business could wait for another day,” said Yelaina, as he entered; and he was conveyed across the room to where, seated on a divan, was a comely, good-tempered-looking woman of any age short of grayness, with a perfumed gentleman with curly hair standing in front of her. The lady was Bareesta’s sister, the gentleman her captured doctor. Claudia Paulovna, good-tempered and comfortable looking, was of the type whose husbands, though loved, are details; who unfailingly attract men from a higher social standing than their own, and who keep on

doing so all their lives. In the present instance, it is true, she had looked a trifle below her, but then the doctor had been the only choice, besides which he possessed "an appearance." Upon Jonathan being introduced, Dr. Solomin, who bowed well, and took quite a while to do so, expanded himself for a talk—an Englishman did not often come his way. For a time Jonathan strove to follow what was said to him; but his answers soon became mechanical. Dr. Solomin, however, was neither hurt nor rebuffed, as he himself had other matter for thought: Jonathan's English clothes laying up days of misery for some unconscious Oofa tailor. Jonathan spoke the language charmingly! Had he lived long in Russia? Back and forwards, yes, for many years. He had, doubtless, heard the opinion maintained that future civilizations would need but two tongues—the English and the Russian? Yes, he had heard it. And what was his opinion?

He was afraid he had not formed an opinion.

Yelaina had moved to the other end of the room, where Herr Julius was amusing Anna Andreaovna and Vanooshka with matches spread in wonderful squares upon the polished surface of the piano; and Jonathan, by slightly moving his position so as to see between the branches of a palm, could watch the group, with Yelaina, her arm around Vanooshka's little body and her cheeks against his hair, watching the game. It seemed to him that no one was conscious of any bad news. Perhaps he could notice in Yelaina's eyes something different from their usual calm brightness—but if so, it was so slight that it might be only fancy! What was it that Herr Julius had heard? But the doctor was still speaking.

"I have heard," said he, speaking in a sibilant, drawling way, "I have heard that in England there is no longer any differ-

ence in manner or dress between your merchant class and your nobility. Is that so?"

"No marked difference, I think—at least in dress," answered Jonathan.

"The result of your democracy!" said the doctor, looking at Claudia Paulovna with the air of having made a point. "It is expedient, I may say necessary, for the nobility to dress with a richness befitting their rank; but if your masses dress with an equal sumptuousness, what is the result?"

"The result?" repeated Jonathan, somewhat at a loss for an answer, "the result?—perhaps that it is largely those who cannot afford it who now wear costly clothes."

"Ah! that cannot go on for long!"

"It frequently does not," said Jonathan.

The doctor was much impressed. Claudia Paulovna said she thought it every one's duty to wear nice clothes, and waited for the doctor's compliment, which,

being given in the way of an admiring glance, the doctor returned to English democracy.

“Tell me, please, is it also so,” he asked, “that on your railways your aristocracy now travel third-class to avoid the tradespeople, who monopolize the higher classes?”

But Jonathan’s nerves had been racked enough; blaming himself for not having first sought out Varvara Stepanovna, he determined to go in search of her, so, assuring the doctor that things in England were not so bad as they appeared, he begged to be excused and left the room.

XII

THE housekeeper's room lay at the end of a narrow, straight-walled passage leading out of the hall; and as Jonathan approached the room the door opened and Varvara herself came out, and on seeing him stood holding the door closed behind her and as if unable to speak. Upon her face was a look of stress and bewilderment, and the hand she held out to him was trembling.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Kireel Paulitch has heard from Petersburg," she replied in a low voice; "all that she said to the peasants—it is known in Petersburg—it may come at any hour—he will tell you!" and, opening the door for him to enter, she hurried away.

Within the room Bareetsa stood with his hands behind his back, looking from the

window, and appeared to Jonathan as an extremely tall, thin man, whose hair, otherwise only slightly grizzled, showed at the temples as two snow-white patches.

“Monsieur Bareetsa?” questioned Jonathan, with a bow.

Without opening his lips, the other answered the question and acknowledged the bow with an equally courteous motion.

“I am—the engineer at the mine,” explained Jonathan; then, as Bareetsa again acknowledged the information only with a bow, he added, “Varvara Stepanovna tells me that you have some ill news from Petersburg.”

At this, Bareetsa, whose face, save for a hint of weariness, was perfectly expressionless, replied that though he had many correspondents in Petersburg, he had not had the pleasure of hearing from any of them lately.

But Jonathan, aware that the other was merely assuming a caution perhaps necessary in Russia, was not to be put off.

"Surely, Monsieur Bareetsa, the fact of Varvara Stepanovna having shown me in here should convince you that I am to be trusted."

"You must pardon me for saying that I quite fail to understand you," answered Bareetsa.

"If," returned Jonathan, "you will equally pardon my saying that you understand me perfectly well. I repeat that I hear you have some bad news from Petersburg!"

"Then I repeat that I have heard nothing from Petersburg!"

Varvara here returned. "She will spare you a moment, but she still does not see that there is cause for alarm," she said, addressing Bareetsa as if in reply to some message; then to Jonathan, "Ivan Daviditch, what are we to do?"

"But indeed I know nothing. What is it, Varvara Stepanovna?"

"She has been summoned to Petersburg," she answered feebly, sinking into

her chair. "You know what that means!"

Jonathan knew what it meant.

"If only she would leave Russia for awhile!" she said, breaking a short silence.

"But she will never ask her husband for her passport—even were there time."

"A passport can be bought," said Jonathan. "Monsieur Bareetsa, who seems to have special means of information, possibly could arrange that."

Bareetsa appeared not to hear what was said; and at that moment Yelaina herself entered the room.

"Varvara Stepanovna," she said gently, "I cannot have you distressing yourself so. They have been frightening you."

"I rather think," drawled Bareetsa, "that Monsieur Forty was merely talking about buying some Russian curiosities, and I—I was about to see after my coachman," and he quietly left the room; Yelaina knit her brow.

"Yet he sent to say he wished to see me here," she murmured. "But, Varvara,

Varvara, don't, dear!" she continued, kneeling by the old woman's chair; "it distresses me ever so much." Then, as Varvara's tears only fell the faster, she turned to Jonathan.

"Nay, Yelaina Grigorovna," said he, "it seems she has cause for her distress—she knows what your being summoned to Petersburg means."

"That I shall go to Petersburg," she answered, rising. "They cannot hurt me; I am not afraid."

"Yet others may be so for you."

"I know, I know! But what would you have me do? If I am summoned to Petersburg I must go."

"Yes, you must go; but it is in what may follow that the danger lies. Yelaina Grigorovna, your detention here would be a mere holiday to that—to Siberia!"

"They will not do that," she answered, shivering slightly; "but if they send me—again, I must go!"

"No, Yelaina Grigorovna, you shall not

go," he said quietly, "so long as there are any who can prevent it."

"No one could prevent it."

"They can, if you will go to Petersburg prepared. Bareetsa, who is able to warn you here, could do so there, and you could leave Russia in time."

"Leave Russia," she said musingly; "that is not an easy thing—even if I wished it. I have no passport."

"Passports can be bought."

"You—you mean a forged passport?"

"A false passport."

"No, not that," she said proudly. "But I must go back to my guests."

"So you choose to be indifferent to the feelings of those around you," he said, meaning to hurt her. But she only flung him a reproachful look and left the room.

For awhile no word was spoken. Varvara sat shrunken in her chair. The day had got warmer and snow had begun to fall, the large, moist flakes framing the small window-panes into tiny ovals. A

hushed suspense within and the muffling snow without made a nerve-quickenening silence in which danger seemed everywhere; moving not upon roads, but closing in upon the house silently through the snow-thickened air. It was a relief at last to hear footsteps in the corridor and see Bareetsa enter. He came forward eagerly.

"Ivan Daviditch, forgive me, but what was I to do? You were a stranger, and—and you know Russia."

"I know," replied Jonathan, grasping the proffered hand.

Varvara raised her head. "Kireel Paulitch," she said, "if Yelaina Grigorovna goes to Petersburg we shall never see her again."

And Bareetsa sat down beside her, and with elbows on his knees and hands clasped in front of him was silent for a while; then he said—

"When the order comes, whether tomorrow or the day after—or even within

the next hour—there must be no delay, I fear. Yelaina Grigorovna must go to Petersburg.”

“And then?” asked Jonathan quietly.

“That rests upon what is to follow. If an ‘Administration Order,’ then I can have her warned in time for her—if she will—to leave Russia.”

As he spoke, Bareetsa blinked his bright eyes as though they burned him. “When, a little while ago, Ivan Daviditch,” he continued, “you spoke about a passport, you put me still closer on my guard, for I had arranged to have one ready.”

“And does she know this?” asked Jonathan.

“I have not told her.”

“Then do so at once,” said Jonathan, “for she does not seem to realize her danger.”

“She must be made to do so,” answered Bareetsa, rising. “Now I am going upstairs; shall you come?”

“I would rather wait here,” answered

Jonathan. "I will be here until you leave; if there is anything more to be said, you know where to find me."

Then Varvara and he were again alone, and the afternoon dragged on. After awhile Varvara prepared some tea and made a pretense of going about her duties, but always with a set expression on her face of listening for something. Toward nine o'clock sounds came of the guests preparing to leave. Varvara reported that sledges had been got ready for them, as the snow was too deep for wheels. Then came Bareetsa for a last word. "She sees the danger, I think; at any rate she will do as we wish," said he, as Jonathan walked with him to the courtyard, whence Claudia Paulovna and her doctor had already driven away.

"And the papers?"

"I will bring them to-morrow evening!"

Then the sledge glided away into the muffled night, and Jonathan, gazing after it, realized that the "dignity of danger"

vanishes when a woman is in question. Yelaina had retired to her room, Varvara told him, and Herr Julius had left a couple of hours ago; so, charging the housekeeper to warn him at once should anything—meaning one thing—happen, he bade her good-night.

Though within doors the hours of the afternoon and evening had seemed so silent and long, work had been doing without; snow in drifts and hollows and level stretches lay many feet thick; the trees, after their summer wakefulness, were speechless and asleep. In the clearing, the steps of the verandah lay beneath an unbroken slope of white, which below curved into a semicircular drift of a size that gave Jonathan trouble to get through. In the sitting-room, seated behind the lamp-lit table, Herr Julius met him with a fixed stare which gave him time to note that Herr Julius had evidently been dwelling upon his old Riga days, for on the table before him lay a somewhat faded

photograph of a group of students in Bacchanalian attitudes, and that also a bottle of Crimean cognac which at midday had been almost untouched was now in a fair way of being empty.

Having shaken the snow from his hair and garments, Jonathan sat down for a moment by the table. "Yourself?" he asked, indicating the central figure of the photograph.

"Yah!" said Herr Julius ominously, and filled his glass.

"I should stop that for to-night, if I were you," said Jonathan.

"And what for should I not trink der cognac? It is a goot wine. What for should I not trink it?"

"Because your nerves won't stand it, for one thing."

"Haff you effer heard me gomplain?"

"That is not it; anyway, let us clear the stuff away for to-night."

Herr Julius gazed solemnly through his glinting spectacles as the bottle was re-

placed in its little varnished cupboard; it was only after Jonathan had returned to his seat and was lighting a cigar that he broke forth.

“Ach, Ivan Daviditch! Ivan Daviditch!” said he, slowly nodding his head, “haff you not yet learned dot no man yet hass effer known one odder man? He may shpeak to him, yes, but not know him; dot we are ass liddle islands, mit deep sea all around which no man yet hass effer crossed—which dey seldom wish to cross, leaving dot for der wise und great ones, und calling them fools. Ivan Daviditch, haff you neffer read Goethe in der German?”

Herr Julius produced from a corner of the divan a little, shabby, dog-eared book, and Jonathan, knowing that at such times Herr Julius was fond of philosophy and occasionally said wise things, emptied his lungs of smoke and held his peace.

“Goethe,” went on Herr Julius, holding up the book, “was, as your Shakespeare, of

der great ones; he strain his eyes from his island, und he see far, though he neffer cross; but he teach dot of all things which shall waft a man furdest is lofe. Ivan Daviditch, your eyes is sad und your heart heavy pecause you fear harm is near Yelaina Grigorovna, und in your heart hass grown up a lofe for Yelaina Grigorovna.”

The languor after strain was upon Jonathan; he was weary with inaction almost to exhaustion, and his eyes were half closed.

“Have I said so?” he muttered below his breath.

“You haff not. Ivan Daviditch, you know at this minute der are tousands of women dying there!”—he motioned to the east—to Siberia. “Starfing in pody und mind; but hass that knowledge made you lose one liddle hour of sleep?”

“What the devil are you driving at?” said Jonathan, moving impatiently in his chair; but Herr Julius continued as if he had not heard—

"It hass not. It is only when fear of such horror comes to one ass your emotion, your lofe, hass made seem part of yourself—of your island—dot you walk your room as you haff done dese last nights. Ach, Ivan Daviditch, your liddle island is shook mid storm. Und, Ivan Daviditch, der islands iss neffer one shoost as another; some iss lonely, so dot it iss well sometimes to try forget him—und when he will not be forgot der cognac he help make pelieve!"

"Is it worth while to make believe? Have you not said that from the bottom of your soul you wished you had never seen brandy?"

"Und what then? Do we haff all we wish?"

"What about the will behind?"

Herr Julius was silent for a space before he said slowly—

"Ivan Daviditch, der iss infirmity of purpose for evil things so well as goot; und when you English say der hell iss paved mit goot intentions you forget der kind

Gott may grant dot heaven iss so mit bad ones."

"Well, it is time for bed," said Jonathan, rising.

"Damn bed!" said Herr Julius. "I must read!"

But a little later, when Jonathan looked in upon him, Herr Julius lay asleep with his head upon the table. So with pillow and rug Jonathan made him comfortable on the divan, and after gently removing the spectacles, which cut into the flushed temples, lowered the lamp and left him.

XIII

THE following morning came with brilliant sunshine and keen still air, and Jonathan, while grimly conscious that the headache he had prophesied for Herr Julius had in fact come to himself, constrained himself to indoor work; for there was work to be done at books if the mine was to be left in order. Herr Julius reported that at least three days' work would be needed at the snow-blocked roads of the mine before the peasants could begin their winter work of sledging the ore to the wharf in readiness for spring. Gangs of workers were, therefore, set to work with shovel and sledge, and Herr Julius, restless and in no mood for steady work, went to and fro between the house and mine, always watching the road from the Big House in expectation of some message

coming. At length, when the afternoon was almost gone and no word had come, he said he would go himself and learn from Varvara Stepanovna whether all was well, and the books being completed, Jonathan set out for what he told himself would probably be his last walk round the mine.

Passing the groups of black figures at work on the drifts he made his way to the higher ground beyond—to where, in the summer, Yelaina had stood and explained to him her conduct at the morning ride. The dusk was closing in; the sky overhead was a pale green, while to the north the horizon was lined by a dense stretch of gray-black cloud, with high above it, in the far-away green, a single star shining. The voices of the workers below could be distinctly heard. Shortly another sound mingled with them—the faint beat of sledge-bells coming from the direction of Oofa. For awhile they grew clearer, and then suddenly grew faint again, pointing to the sledge having entered the forest;

and for awhile only occasional single beats could be heard. Sufficient, however, for Jonathan to know that it could not be Ba-reetsa who was coming—his bells were rich and deep; these thin and hard as if from a posting station. The bank of cloud in the north was rapidly mounting in the green and was now only a few feet below the silver point of the star. With a gust of clanging the sledge emerged from the forest and could be discerned as a black blotch moving rapidly over the snow, and by the space it covered, Jonathan judged it to be drawn by three horses harnessed *goosam*—the Russian tandem. The road down to the village curved within a few yards of where he was standing, and as the sledge approached this point, two figures could be discerned beneath the hood; one, by the glint of buttons, in uniform. Jonathan watched it curve down the path, and as it entered the lower forest road hurried, plunging through the deep snow, to a point which commanded the latter for more than

half its distance. By stooping so as to bring his eyes within about a foot of the snow he could follow the sledge with fair distinctness. It was approaching the point where the road divided—to the right down to the village, straight on to the Big House only. It reached this point and kept straight on.

Rising from his stooping posture Jonathan remained motionless for awhile, standing kneedeep in the snow; a sense of helplessness upon him. The arrival of the sledge—the glint of the uniform within—could bear but one meaning. The plans of yesterday were overturned. It changed everything; even the night was changing—the stretch of cloud in the north had mounted and as he gazed upwards reached the star and blotted it out as suddenly as the blowing out of a candle. A faint, far-off sound of wind stirred the trees, and unseen, a fine snow began to fall through the dusk.

He must go to her at once. But after

a few steps he turned in the direction of the clearing, moved by an instinct that he might perhaps never again return to the Little House there. From his bedroom he took a thin old watch that had belonged to his mother; a revolver and a supply of cigars, and once more set out for the Big House. The night had turned to a commotion of wind and whirling grains of ice which at times, driving upwards, drove even beneath his eyelids. He saw some one approaching and Herr Julius hurried up, his face streaked with sweat.

“What is it?”

“Der dam police!”

“So!”

“I have left Varvara Stepanovna,” panted Herr Julius, fumbling with his spectacles in his endeavor to clear them from the steam that condensed from his heated face, “and wass crossing der hall when I hear Yelaina Grigorovna upstairs at der piano—it wass der Serenade of Schubert—she blay it goot, so I stop, und

as I listen, from der courtyard come two men, one—der young one—in uniform of police. Dey ask iss Madame Mardoff at home? I say I haf not seen her; when a maid comes—it wass Polka, I think—yes, she says, she iss at home. Iss there guests? they ask; no, says Polka. Ach, den show us upstairs, they say, it iss impordand. Und I go back to tell Varvara Stepanovna; Ivan Daviditch, dey haf arrested her—der dam police!”

Since he had watched the sledge go on past the village road, Jonathan had been struggling against a feeling almost of despair and terror. The absoluteness of the power which was moving against Yelaina, and his helplessness to save her, made the despair; the terror came from something deeper—not for himself but of himself. Out of his despair stole a hope which would not be crushed down. He had long since brought himself silently to accept his future days and years in England—days of level sameness, apart from her, knowing

these same days to her were days of loneliness in the glittering pageantry of Petersburg. But the coming of the sledge could alter this. She would hardly live to reach Siberia. Then for her oblivion and rest—and for him the same. Were the Buddhists then—four hundred millions of mankind—wrong in making heaven Nirvana? While he fought against the feeling his inability quite to crush it down made him long for the coming of Bareesta as the sick find strength in the strong.

“We must go to her,” he said.

At the courtyard gate they suddenly sprang aside as out of the storm a light sledge dashed in past them. It was Bareetsa, whose sledge bells had been unheard in the wind. A few words told him what had happened, and together they hurried up to the *salle*.

Seated at the side table were two strangers drinking smoking glasses of tea; at the opposite side, by the wall upon a

small cane chair, with Varvara Stepanovna by her side, sat Yelaina, white and quiet, with a frightened look in her eyes; like a child that had been scolded, thought Jonathan with a pang as he went over to her.

"They are taking me to Moscow," she said. "I am not afraid—but—yes, yes I—yes, I am frightened."

But he could find not one sane word of comfort to say to her. Bareetsa was speaking to the officers.

"Gentlemen, what is this?" he was saying. The elder of the two—the one in mufti—shrugged his shoulders. "Madame Mardova is to accompany us to Moscow," said he.

"But, gentlemen, the reason?"

Another shrug of the shoulders from the officer.

"Administrative Procedure?" questioned Bareetsa.

"Administrative Procedure!" replied the officer.

"But surely it is not your intention to subject a lady—to expose her to the dangers of a night like this; the Moscow train does not leave Oofa till midday to-morrow," urged Bareetsa.

"Sir," replied the other, putting down his glass of tea and rising from the table, "I have not the honor of knowing who you are, nor what right you have, if any, to speak for Madame Mardova. I may, however, tell you that we leave within the hour."

"Presumably you are acting according to instructions," persisted Bareetsa, purposely showing some heat; "but it is inconceivable they are such that will compel a woman to face a night like to-night; the risk to yourselves, gentlemen—on the steppe you will not know north from south, the horses will not face it; you will never reach Oofa."

"We shall leave within the hour," repeated the other.

"Then I can say no more," said Ba-

reetsa, sinking into a chair and covering his face with his hands.

But his words had their effect, for the younger of the men left the room, and upon his return a whispered consultation was held, after which they announced their decision to wait for the morning; saying that Madame Mardova must, of course, look upon herself as strictly under their supervision, and must give her word that she would not in the meantime leave the house. The officer addressed himself to Yelaina, but Bareetsa quickly answered for her.

"The night alone, gentlemen, is sufficient guarantee of that," said he, "but Madame Mardova will not, I fear, give you any assurance whatever, for she does not recognize your authority to make such a demand."

"As you please! but in any case we shall take precautions," answered the elder of the two. And, addressing Varvara, he continued—

“Perhaps you will accompany Madame to her apartments and also show us the way thither.”

Whereupon Yelaina rose, and with Varvara left the room, followed by the officers.

Vanooshka, pale of face, silently stole between his father’s knees. Anuta looked ill and haggard.

“Is—is it the worst?” she faltered.

“I had rather they were taking her to Petersburg,” replied Bareetsa slowly. “You heard they are to take her to Moscow, which means probably—no trial, an Administrative Order, and——” He did not finish his sentence; Siberia was a word too well understood, and Anuta buried her face in the divan and sobbed audibly. Herr Julius paced a corner of the room, smoking and violently blinking. Jonathan, outwardly calm, lay back in his chair and endeavored to control a sickening tremor of all his muscles and a straining of his jaws.

A maid came in to clear away the tray, and Bareetsa bade her send up his coachman. When the man, a tall gray-haired old peasant, appeared at the doorway Bareetsa motioned him to him.

“Ivan,” said he, speaking in a low tone, “you are to go back to Oofa at once.”

“Good, Kareel Paulitch,” answered the man, tugging at his bushy eyebrows as though they were mustaches.

“Listen! you are to bring back the gray *troika* and my light traveling sledge; Vanka will come with you with the two chestnuts and a stable-sledge; bring forage for the horses and a couple of days’ food for yourselves.”

“Good, Kareel Paulitch!”

“Attend! Once clear of Oofa, Vanka is to turn off for Chulni, saving the horses all he can. He will rest at Chulni and at daybreak go on for a couple of versts along the road to Borogooslan and wait there in some sheltered spot for further instructions.”

“Good, Kareel Paulitch!”

“You yourself will bring the gray *troika* to the edge of the forest here near the new workings, and remain in the shelter of the trees for further instructions.”

“Good, Kareel Paulitch,” again replied the man impassively, as he would have done had his instructions been to drive to the moon.

“If any questions are asked you may say I am going a journey. Now repeat what you are to do.”

Still finding comfort in his eyebrows, Ivan looked around him, and finally spying a brown cake of snow on the rug at his feet, trodden from his felt boots, carefully picked it up and hid it beneath a fold of the scarf about his waist; then like a child at lessons he slowly repeated his instructions.

“Right,” said Bareetsa, “and remember—give the horses their heads should you lose the road!”

"God will help," said Ivan, crossing himself.

"He will!" was the fervent answer. "Now go, and God go with you!"

"You mean to try for the railway at Borogooslan?" asked Jonathan in a whisper, as the man departed.

Bareetsa nodded.

"If we can elude our two gentlemen," said he. "With fresh horses beyond Chulni she should cover the remaining seventy versts between there and the railway before to-morrow evening—the Samara train does not leave till nine."

"Samara, Penza, Viazma, Warsaw, the frontier—five days!" said Jonathan slowly. "It will be watched before then!"

"It may and it may not!" returned Bareetsa: "our gentlemen must be made to believe she has gone in another direction, however! Now see—you must go with her, she cannot well go alone, you were about to return to England in any case—yes?"

Jonathan nodded.

“Very well,” continued Bareetsa, “after you are well away, Anna Andreaovna, with Yelaina Grigorovna’s maid, who will dress like her mistress, will start for Nijni, taking horses from her; I will go with them, and at the first change send back the horses in time to give our gentlemen their clue when they wake. Then we will leave the post road and keep further to the south, away from telegraph wires; our gentlemen will probably hope to overtake us before anything is known of Yelaina Grigorovna’s escape; well, at Nijni they may overtake us!—but by then you ought to be nearing Berlin!”

“We ought to manage it if only you can maintain your start of them,” said Jonathan earnestly.

“There are chances against it—yes. And we have first to elude our friends here. But if Yelaina Grigorovna goes to Moscow she will never return to Mardova.”

Towards midnight the storm had sensibly lessened, but the anxious listeners in Varvara Stepanovna's sitting-room were straining their ears for other sounds than those of the storm. On Yelaina's retiring, the officers had taken up their quarters in her boudoir, thereby cutting off all egress from her chamber. But Varvara, who was allowed access to her mistress, had undertaken to find other means of egress. The great brick stove in the wall of the bathroom adjoining her mistress's chamber was old, she said, little better than calcined sand; half-an-hour would remove sufficient of the brickwork to open a way to the corridor. Jonathan sat dressed ready for the journey. Ivan was waiting with the horses in the forest road. Bareetsa had been to give him his instructions more than an hour ago. Now no one spoke. The house was silent save for the nerve-trying sounds which grow out of silence. The listeners had long since lost the sense of proportion and

locality of sounds—a crack of the stair might be a pistol-shot, the drumming in one's ears miles away.

At length a door opened softly and Varvara stood in the doorway, and behind her Yelaina attired for the journey. No word was said, but Bareetsa, slightly raising her fur cap, kissed her brow; Anuta kissed her lips, whereat Vanooshka, ashamed of his tears, buried a sob in the folds of her cloak. Herr Julius remained in the background; Yelaina held her hand out to him; he sprang forward and bending over it: “God bless you,” said he, his eyes shining.

At the small side door giving upon the kitchen garden by which Yelaina was to leave, Varvara, her hand on the latch, hesitated before the final good-by. But Yelaina, throwing open her cloak, folded the old woman in her arms; and for a space Varvara's gray head lay upon her mistress's bosom.

Then the door opened, and lest the roar

of the wind through the house should disturb the officers, was rapidly closed again, shutting the fugitives out into the night.

XIV

IT was noon of the following day. All night the sledge had slid on through the storm; at times, when the road was more sheltered and the snow less deep, at a fair speed; but for the most part slowly and toilsomely. Twice they had been stopped by the drifts; and once the sledge had been partially overturned. At dawn, when the storm was at its worst, they had been compelled to stop and turn the sledge with its back to the blast for awhile, when they took the opportunity to eat a morsel of the food which Varvara had packed for them. About eight that morning they ought to have sighted Chulni, beyond which the fresh horses were to be awaiting them. But Chulni had not yet been sighted, though it was past noon. Ivan—gray-haired old Ivan, who had watched over Bareetsa in his long illness—was sure

of his road, and Chulni was yet some four versts distant, he said.

And so it proved, for soon, with startling suddenness, their strained eyes discerned the great wind- and snow-swept dome of the church towering above them through the wrack. They were in the village street before a sign of it had been seen. Ivan pulled up his horses—they did not need much stopping! “Chulni,” he said laconically.

Their intention had been to skirt the village on its right and regain the main track a little beyond. There was nothing for it now but to continue right on. The street, however, was entirely deserted; the storm keeping every one within doors. The only sign of life to be seen as they passed down the long, wide street was an occasional peasant face pressed to a dim window in wonder that any one should travel on such a day. Save for this the village seemed asleep and silent, shrouded in by the storm.

Two versts beyond they came upon the fresh horses in a dip of the road, standing huddled in the shelter of a patch of willow scrub. The peasant in charge was a son of old Ivan—Ivan the younger. Father and son greeted each other with a nod as the younger man stepped out from his shelter and stroked down the trembling, sweating flanks of the tired team.

“We will go more quickly now!” said Jonathan, speaking into the sledge to Yelaina, as he helped to put in the fresh horses.

“And Ivan will have a rest,” returned she. “Tell him, please, to wait at Chulni till the storm is over.”

Ivan had been driving for the past twenty-four hours almost without a break, and for some while now it had become to them in the sledge a matter for wonder that the old man could continue to face the storm without a sign of fatigue. But when the final tightening up of the harness was being done, and Jonathan, speaking

across the backs of the horses, instructed him how he was to go back to Chulni and there rest till the storm passed, or, if he chose, wait there till his son returned with the present horses, Ivan stopped in his work and patiently heard him to the end; then he pulled down his fur cap more tightly about his ears and, looking away into the storm, answered—

“Barin, Ivan is a good lad—yes, Ivan is a good lad, but when my father begot me men begot stronger children than they do now; I can outlast him! I will go on; let the young one take back the horses to Chulni.”

The young one smiled sheepishly at his father, while Jonathan in vain urged the wisdom of young Ivan going on with them. The old man would not be convinced, and by sheer persistence was at length allowed to have his way. And so they continued their journey with fresh horses and the old driver, and once more began the beat of the storm about them. It had been less

violent while the forenoon lasted; now it began once more to increase. Snow fell faster and was more blinding as it swooped all ways at once under the force of the wind, while the cold grew in intensity. They seemed to be shut within an impenetrable circle of white commotion.

A couple of hours passed—the horses frequently up to their bellies in snow, the pull of the sledge obviously telling upon them. For the last half-hour Ivan had been almost continuously running by the side of the sledge, holding on to the box with one hand, and getting into his place for a minute or two only where the snow was less deep. But at length he began to show signs of exhaustion, and Yelaina had just urged that they should stop for awhile when, with a stumble and a running effort to regain himself, Ivan fell and rolled over upon his back. Still retaining his hold of the reins, he was dragged along some yards before the horses were brought to a standstill. Jonathan sprang to his

assistance. "God be with me—what's the matter?" cried the old man, looking up in a dazed manner, and for a moment making no effort to rise.

"The matter," exclaimed Jonathan, bending over him, "is that you are done up—and I fear we have lost our way."

"It is nothing!" cried Ivan, slowly scrambling to his feet; "it is nothing; but, yes—truly—we have lost the road!" and he looked helplessly about him.

He was obviously in a much worse plight than he would admit of, and it was clear that further exposure would be dangerous. Yelaina poured some brandy from a traveling flask and held the cup to his lips, insisting that he should drink.

"He must go inside," said Jonathan. "I will drive!"

And Yelaina began to prepare a place for him inside the sledge. But Ivan was not so easily disposed of. What, he? Go inside the sledge by the *bareenya*? Never, never!—impossible! It was noth-

ing—he was equal to another sixty versts yet! God would help them! And when at last he saw that Jonathan was determined he grew angry, and in a dazed, tottering way began to grope for the reins. Each moment of delay added to the danger of the position, for dusk now began to show signs of falling. The horses stood dejectedly licking up little mouthfuls of the snow, in which they were sunk almost to their bellies, while the sledge settled deeper in its place. Yelaina took him by the arm. “Ivan,” she said gently, “it is my wish that you go inside.”

“But, *bareenya*, I am strong!”

“Ivan, I command you.”

The old man drew off his fur cap, and the wind and snow sported with his thick, gray hair.

“I will obey, *bareenya*; but God help me for a helpless old man!” And going dejectedly and with unsteady steps to the sledge, he clambered in without another word.

He had, however, barely sunk down among the rugs when he started up again, listening intently.

"*Barin, barin!*" he cried, holding out a hand in warning to Jonathan, "there is something coming!"

And as he spoke a low sledge, drawn by two horses and with another tethered behind, came into view. A moment's strained watching, and they recognized young Ivan with the horses which hours ago ought to have been safely back in Chulni.

The meeting was as much a surprise to the new-comer as to the others; but the cause of it was soon apparent. Young Ivan also had lost his way, and instead of going towards Chulni had been simply circling, for he now approached from the opposite direction to that in which they judged Chulni to lie.

Old Ivan from within the shelter of the sledge poured out his wrath upon his son, who, standing by his horses, humbly and

silently took the chiding as but his due.

Dusk was now rapidly lessening their circle of view, and Jonathan realized bitterly that all hope of reaching Borogooslan that night must be abandoned. To attempt it through such a storm with foundered horses was hopeless. Even if they knew in what direction to go, the train would have left Borogooslan long before they could hope to cover the distance, while a twenty-four hours' wait for the next train spent under the prying eyes of the station officials was not to be thought of. Chulni must be the nearest village, Ivan said; but how far they were from it, or in what direction it lay, he knew not. With young Ivan's experience before them, it was evident that they might wander the night through in vain search of it; while to camp upon the exposed plain where they now were was equally impossible. In the shelter of some wood lay their one hope.

Yes, said Vanka, on being questioned,

he had a short while before seen the edge of what appeared to be a forest. His own tracks should not yet be obliterated, and if they went at once they might find it, he thought.

Jonathan gave the order, and the tired horses with a struggle got the sledge in motion once more; Ivan, triumphant now, going in front in his son's sledge, while Jonathan followed with the other. Soon a dim, straight line on their left showed the forest, and within a verst of their last halting-place they gained its shelter. So great, however, was the force of the wind that it was necessary to penetrate entirely through a wide outer belt of spruce firs before they found beneath the pines beyond the shelter they sought.

The dusk outside was here changed to night, making the piloting of the horses between the trees an extremely difficult matter. So, when once within the belt of firs, at a point where the pines grew in somewhat more open order, though meet-

ing densely overhead, the sledges were drawn up.

The change from the hurricane without to the stillness of the forest was wonderful, the circle of the trees a sanctuary. In spite of the dark roof of boughs the snow lay without a single wind-made ripple beneath, for as it struck the topmost leaves, the branches, tossing in the wind, sieved it down through the lower foliage until it fell, a fine white powder, vertically and silently between the windless trunks. Thus the high foliage overhead looked dark and sullen, while the low, frond-like boughs of the spruce firs were bent beneath their weight of white.

Their first care was for the horses upon which so much depended. They were not so badly foundered but what, after a brisk rub down with dry boughs of fir, they could nose and munch the hay which Ivan spread for them on an empty sack stretched between the shafts of his sledge. A superabundance of fuel lay ready to

their hands in the same dry branches, and a couple of fires soon made matters look more cheerful. A smoke-begrimed kettle, which Vanka produced from the bottom of his sledge, served as kettle and teapot; food from the provision-basket was thawed, and Jonathan and Yelaina ate their first food since daybreak.

By this time night had fallen, and in the cathedral-like hush of the forest the trunks of the pines, ruddy within the circle of fire-light, rose like fluted columns of perpendicular arches into the dark vault of the foliage, while the blue-whiteness of the quiet snow lay beneath for marble pavement. Where the trees were more open, Jonathan trod out a little path some fifty yards long, where he and Yelaina, when their meal was finished, could ease their limbs after the cramping of the sledge.

As yet nothing had been said as to plans when once the frontier was passed; but during the long hours in the sledge the matter had never been wholly out of Jona-

than's mind, especially as he more than suspected that Yelaina's private means would now be only very slender, even if the leaving Russia would not leave her penniless. So as they walked the little path, and there was a breathing time for speech, he broached the subject.

"I have been speaking to Ivan," he said; "he thinks he knows about where we are—about sixty versts to go yet—so that by starting at eight in the morning we should be by the afternoon close to Borogooslan; we need not, of course, enter the town till about train time."

"Yes," she answered, "it would perhaps be better not to wait too long at the station."

"So our having lost the way means, so far as I can see, that we will be a day longer than we planned in reaching the frontier. But after that—after we have passed the frontier—what are your plans?"

"I have not thought. Every one has

been thinking and acting so much for me that I seem to have been doing nothing for myself. Besides, for awhile it is a rest not to think at all."

"Why not come to England?" he said, after a pause. "You could rest there while you thought over your plans."

Trying to speak calmly he described Kirkthorp, with its square-towered church, its one wide main street and its quaint little shops. He spoke of the Vicarage standing between the church and the sea, with its white windows deep-set in ivy and its garden going down to the edge of the cliff overlooking the bay, where the sea was ever moving backwards and forwards across the yellow sands. Uncle Phineas and Teresa would welcome her so warmly that, easy as it was to love them, she would love them at once.

"Thanks," she said gently, "I should like to see England, but it is impossible—at least, yet awhile."

"Though you have no other plans?"

"No, I have no other plans."

"Then why not come?" And after waiting a moment he repeated: "Why not come to England?"

"I think you might know," she said at length, a faint color rising to her cheeks.

"Perhaps I do," he said slowly. "I am always in London; however, if you wish it I would not come to Kirkthorp while you were there."

"That is not it."

"How?"

"It would only mean disquiet for you were I in England."

"Would it be otherwise were you in another country?"

"Yes, when you have lost all touch of me and are able to take up the threads of your work again."

"Am I to lose all touch of you?"

She freed her hand from her cloak and hesitatingly placed it within his arm.

"Yes," she said gently.

"And when?"

"I have said I have not thought about things yet clearly—but—but what is the first town after the frontier, Berlin? And from Berlin you go on to England. I will probably rest at Berlin awhile."

They continued their walk in silence, and save that he held the hand within his arm in his own, he made no sign of dissent, or even that he had heard. Her words called for a readjustment of his thoughts; the moment was too vital for ready speech. Young Ivan was stretched asleep in his sledge. His father sat by him smoking and occasionally glancing out of the corners of his cavernous bright eyes to where the *barin* and *bareenya* were walking. As he prepared for sleep he talked within his beard. "When God can make a woman so beautiful—well, it is not for me to know why He makes so few of them and so many of the other sort. Now there was my Domna," he soliloquized, knocking the ashes from his pipe, "aye, she was a

good wife, and a bearer of children with the best, but she was ugly; yes, she was ugly; my God, how ugly!" And in pious memory of his dead wife Ivan crossed himself ere he laid himself down by his son. He was snoring rhythmically ere Jonathan spoke again.

"Yelaina Grigorovna," he said slowly, "drastic measures ought to have at least a probability of success."

"You mean?"

"That your plan is futile!"

"I think not."

"It is! Believe me it is—Yelaina, come to me for always!"

There was a momentary halt in her walk—a slight stumble.

"You are brave enough?" he asked.

"It is courage to resist that I need!" she whispered.

"Then come!"

"No, I love you too well for that!" she said quickly.

"Is that possible?"

"Indeed, yes, ever to burden you with the weight of a secret love."

They had gone the entire length of the path, and turned in their walk before Jonathan spoke again.

"Then it is not to be?" he said in a low voice.

"It cannot be!" she said.

"And, I cannot urge—cannot beseech you when all the giving and trust would be yours. But why speak of burdening me?—well—perhaps that too! To ask you to believe otherwise would be to ask you to believe me different from other men!"

"And it is because you do differ from other men that I say what I do. As for giving—ah, I would give you everything—yes, everything—if that were all!"

"Yelaina," he said huskily, "I am only as other men. I—"

"No, no," she returned gently, "nor do I wish it. Shall I tell you that I am weak

enough to be glad you have asked? But, indeed, it is not for us!"

"Why?"

"Partly because such secret loves must end in sorrow. In our case the tragedy would be all for you."

"If it spare you it is sufficient—but why must it come?"

"Because I could never be your secret love," she answered quickly; "I would be too proud of it; I could hide it from no one; I would glory in it. And such things are harshly judged—especially in your English world. For a time, perhaps, all would be well, but a time would come when you would feel the little slights shown to me—though I should never feel them—you would resent them and be angry with the world, and little by little withdraw yourself from it."

"Should I mind?"

"That is not quite it—perhaps on my account you would—but it would mean your being in opposition to all around you,

and all your work, half of your life would be useless. Were you one likely to change and grow tired, it would be different, for I would know and would go away—it would have been worth it!—but you would not change; you would give up everything for me, and whether I went or stayed it would be the same and I could not alter it—that would be the tragedy!”

“And so the changing fashion of respectability must govern both our lives!” he said quietly.

She remained silent, walking by his side with bent head. He had, however, now got himself more in hand.

“I don’t understand,” he added.

“Listen,” she said, stopping in her walk, “it is difficult to explain just what I mean, but—can you not know what the temptation is to me? I am a woman!—can you not know that my heart aches to say yes?”

“Say it!”

“No, no; don’t you see it could never

be! Now take me to the fire; it is getting colder."

He led her to the fire and was conscious of her brushing tears from her face.

"Yelaina," he said, as she stood with hands held out to the blaze, "you are wrong—but I will say no more."

She dropped her hand to his and held it for a moment by her side.

"Do you know," she said, in a more cheerful tone, "that for the future my life will be much fuller of interest?"

"Will it?"

"Yes, for scraps of news of you will reach me somehow, telling of what you are doing in the world, perhaps of your becoming famous as you now are in Russia."

"I think I can say that you will not hear that; the men who become famous, the men who do things are those who see only one side of a question, but see it so clearly that they are blind to everything else; if I dismiss an office boy, I suffer afterwards

for days by seeing his view of the question."

"That is only because you are a just man," she said.

"Some people call them 'decadents,' " he replied.

"Some people are stupid and blind," she said. "But now good-night," and she held out her hand.

He took her to the sledge, and after seeing that she was well wrapped round with rugs, he buckled the leather apron up to the front of the hood, thus turning the sledge into a kind of tent. Then bidding her good-night he returned to the fire where, with a rug and a pile of fir-boughs, he tried to calm himself for sleep.

He awoke with a start to find Yelaina standing by him. In the first instant of his vision he thought her hands were held out to him; but as he sprang to his feet she was standing with her cloak close drawn around her.

"Is it late?" he exclaimed.

"There is light on the tops of the trees," she answered. "Have I disturbed you too soon?"

He assured her that he was glad to be awake and, looking at his watch, that it was time they were astir.

While the horses were being looked to and some tea prepared, Ivan was sent to reconnoiter. He returned with the news that the road lay only a few yards from the edge of the forest and that they were, he thought, about seventy versts from Borogooslan; and, further, that the storm had entirely passed.

It was decided that young Ivan must now return to Oofa; so after a hasty meal and numberless stern orders from his father as to his conduct on the road, the young man led his horses away, in Indian file, between the trees. Half-an-hour later the traveling sledge itself emerged from the forest; old Ivan sprang to his seat, and with a crack of his whip and a cry

to his horses the sledge once more began its journey to Borogooslan.

The night had, indeed, brought transformation; the stillness of the air under the intensity of the cold seemed absolute. Overhead the sky was blue; only near the distant horizon was it veiled with the silver-gray of a light, frost-formed haze. The endless mounds and hollows of drifted snow lay in rich colors beneath the sunshine—the crests almost blood-red, the hollows dark with indigo. The quivering distances made the eyes ache with their gleaming; the air sparkled with tiny frost-crystals; the runners of the sledge sang and smoked as they cut through the powdery snow; the world was buoyant. Midday came and went, and traveling so as to spare the horses, the brilliance of the day was dying into evening when they approached Borogooslan. Good-bys were said to Ivan, who stood with bared head till they passed out of sight within the station; and another phase of their journey

began. In a corner of the stuffy refreshment room some food was served them, but of such questionable freshness that their meal was of the meagerest. The station began to grow busier; groups of peasants and of the simpler merchant-class appeared—the former with their possessions slung from their waists in rough linen bags, the latter with their baggage bound up in bed-quilts. About the time the train was due Jonathan learned that it need not be expected for another two hours; so a further period of suspense had to be got through. At last the train pulled up at the platform; whereupon a couple of gendarmes appeared, looking tall and important in their uniforms and white-plumed caps, and having glanced around among the passengers took up their posts on the platform. Though aware that they were there only on their usual duty of watching each incoming and outgoing train, Jonathan felt ill at ease at their presence; even though they gravely

saluted as he and Yelaina crossed to the train, presumably in acknowledgment of their being the only persons of importance on the platform.

They were fortunate in finding a small coupé disengaged, which they at once secured, and having arranged Yelaina's rugs Jonathan begged her to try to sleep a little, while he found a seat for himself in an adjoining compartment. When a couple of hours later, wishing to see that she was comfortable for the night, he lightly tapped at her door, and getting no response softly opened it, she was lying with a rug about her, peacefully sleeping.

XV

THE two other passengers whom Jonathan found in his compartment lay audibly asleep, and so huddled up that it was impossible to know what manner of persons they were. His own entrance at Borogooslan had only disturbed them sufficiently to change their snoring to another key for a few moments. Though the compartment was inexpressibly stuffy, he settled himself in a corner and tried to sleep a little. But whenever he reached the borderline between dozing and sleeping the rumble and speed of the train would magnify itself in his brain to a sudden rush and crash which brought him fully awake again. So that after awhile he gave up thought of sleep. And so on and on through the night, until, in the gray of the morning, Samara was reached,

and a little later the wide, swirling shallows of the Volga were crossed. At Samara he procured coffee and rolls, and they breakfasted together in her coupé. She had had a refreshing sleep, she said; and had in some cunning feminine way made a toilet, so that she looked fresh and almost untravel-worn, save for a trace of weariness in her eyes. Now he was back in his own compartment and again staring sleepily from the window, with always the same trick of his imagination: so soon as he had almost gained unconsciousness the rumble and speed would become a roar to bring him sharply back to consciousness again. They had entered a cutting through a belt of forest when he became aware that their speed was in reality altering. The train was going slower and slower, until with a jerk it came to a standstill. The sound of a door opening was heard, and a blast of cold air drove down the corridor. A small roadside station, he thought, though from his side of the com-

partment there was no sign of a platform to be seen. It seemed a trivial thing; but an undefined feeling of anxiety seized him. His strained hearing caught detached murmurs of voices in Yelaina's compartment, and he was about to rise to go to her, when the door opened and the conductor stood beckoning him. The man's face bore a look of authority distinct from its usual ingratiating, tip-expecting smile.

"You are wanted in there," he said, nodding towards Yelaina's door.

She was sitting at the far corner, her hands clasped in her lap, and by her side the two officers whom sixty hours before they had left at Mardova.

"Possibly you can explain matters on our arrival in Moscow," said the elder of the two, motioning him to a seat by Yelaina's side; "but in the meantime you will please consider yourself also under arrest, Monsieur."

"And the reason?" asked Jonathan, with little enough interest in the answer.

"About that I can say nothing," returned the officer. "Still, you know, it was really a mistake to have attempted anything like this."

"The mistake is in such a thing being necessary," returned Jonathan.

"That is as it may be," the other answered imperturbably. "But there need be no fuss, if you please; we have some thirty hours yet to Moscow, and upon your parole that nothing further will be attempted, there shall be in the meantime no unnecessary restrictions placed upon you."

Their words were given, and they were left alone.

It was known afterwards that the few likely railway stations had been warned the previous night, and that in the early hours of that morning, when the officers were in a village near the railway, word had reached them that a couple answering to their description had joined the train at Borogooslan the previous night, and a

quick drive had brought them to the line in time to stop and board the train.

"Then Bareetsa's plan has failed," said Jonathan, with dry lips, when the officers had left.

"Yes," she answered quietly; "but don't let it distress you so. Who's to know if it is for good or ill? I have felt, ever since we left Borogooslan, that we should never reach the frontier. Who's to know if it is for good or ill? For good, I think."

"Do you forget all it means, Yelaina?"

"No, I forget nothing," she answered. And after a pause: "Yes, I am content that it has happened so."

"Why do you speak so?"

She answered wistfully: "Because each hour I have been growing weaker, and if we had succeeded—perhaps—I don't know, but perhaps—I would not have had strength to let you go from me."

His hand sought hers, and for awhile there was silence.

"It is almost," she whispered after

awhile, looking into his face, "it is almost as if one of us were dead. And now I can tell you that I love you!"

"And it is I who must live!" he said huskily.

Some time about noon they changed into the direct train for Moscow. Then again across steppe and level shrubland, through the afternoon and night, till morning broke once more, and they were in the forest belt again. And by the afternoon Moscow was seen in the distance; "Moscow built of stone," with its barbaric brilliancy of coloring, its pulse of Eastern splendor yet barely dulled by the West.

They were told that for the present they would remain at one of the hotels; a couple of droshkies were called, and, an officer going in each, they drove down the long avenue and through the narrow, cobble-paved street to the great Slavyanski Bazaar Hotel.

By nightfall further misfortune began

to loom. As Jonathan moved restlessly about the small room in which he had been placed he became conscious of feeling wretchedly ill. His bones ached, his skin burned, and his head felt full almost to bursting. "Just when she may need me most," he thought bitterly. He rang the bell, and asked to be supplied with quinine. But each hour the fever increased. He must try to sleep. So he settled himself upon the bed without undressing and drew the quilt over him. But the night was a wakeful one. The room where he was, though apparently at the top of the house, had the same aspect as that one in which, six months before, he had first seen her. Only six months. And now his world was entirely changed; and she—— Of what avail his pigmy strength against the power that was closing round her? And yet there might be a possibility still for something to be done. But what? Curse this fever! He felt certain that she was still in the building, for though on

their arrival they had been led in different directions, he had learned that they would remain at the hotel till instructions came from Petersburg; and it was hardly likely they would come to-night. Madame Mardova's case would be decided by the highest of the gang. He knew Petersburg well enough to flush with the thought that the very minister who held her life in his hand might probably at this moment be supping with a chorus girl. How mad the world was! It is hardly to be wondered at that the night was a wakeful one.

And the morning was no better; and a weary day dragged through. The little shiny-faced Tartar who waited upon him, though attentive and anxious to show sympathy, either could not or would not—probably could not—give him any information. Then toward night came the fear that he was getting light-headed, and Jonathan lay on the bed in the dark and tried to prove to himself that his brain was

still clear by desperately calculating the areas and cubes of various irregular forms. He remembered one or two simple chemical equations, and found he could make both sides balance. Yes, his brain was still clear enough—he must endeavor to keep it so; finally he fell asleep. In the morning he felt better; but another silent day had to be got through, and the night. But on the morning afterwards, the fever—under repeated doses of quinine—had left him, and, save for a feeling of weakness, he felt almost well again.

Since their arrival at the hotel he had seen nothing of the officers; but late that afternoon the elder of the two appeared, following at the heels of a stout, white-haired man in uniform, who slowly let himself into the chair which his subordinate drew to the table for him.

“Now, Mr.—eh—eh——”

“Forty,” said the Lieutenant, who stood by his superior’s chair.

“Forty—eh, Forty. Now what is this

stupidness that you have been mixing yourself up with?" began the white-haired man, speaking in English and with a purring, well-bred accent, as he folded his soft white hands on the table.

The question seemed to require no answer, so Jonathan gave none, nor stirred from his seat on the sofa at the other side of the table.

"Now I have here," continued the stout man, taking a paper from his lieutenant, which he spread out before him on the table and tapped lightly with the back of his gracefully curved fingers (Jonathan noticed that the palm was mottled and cushioned like a baby's); "I have here a record of your past visit to this country, and I am bound to say the record is an admirable one—excellent. Your father, too—eh, David Forty—was well known amongst us, rendering, in fact, some service on—eh—on——"

His lieutenant bent forward, pointed

out a paragraph in the document, and said—

“The Oranburgh Railway, General.”

“Yes, yes, the Oranburgh Railway. Now, is it not unwise that you should have been led into mixing yourself up in this worse than stupid affair?”

The General rested his plump hands on the paper and gazed blandly across the table.

“Is there need for all this?” said Jonathan quietly. “But as you ask me, I say that I do not think it unwise; though I do think it unwise that ‘this worse than stupid affair’ is still possible.”

“That is as it may be. However, I am bound to grant that you had some temptation, for the lady is charming—certain—ly char—ming,” returned the General, pursing up his mouth and half-closing his kindly blue eyes, producing an expression wholly lascivious.

“We will leave that, if you please,”

Jonathan answered, flushing. "It is doubtless decided what is required of me; am I to be conducted to the frontier and dismissed from the country? If that is it, please say so."

"Yes, that is precisely it. But we will come to that later; only remember, I am not your judge—God forbid, God forbid; I know the temptation!" Again the rosy mouth was pursed up and the eyes half-closed. "The lady will receive the proper, the only adequate—eh—correction. It may be a severe one; but again I say I am not the judge. Now it is just possible—mind, I have no absolute authority to say so—but I believe it is possible that you can be of service to her. She had, as you are aware, a forged passport in her possession."

For the first time Jonathan remembered the passport which had been so anxiously procured for her. Why had he not taken it from her in the train? How easily he

could have destroyed it! But yet, would it make any real difference?

“And,” continued the General, “these things are being used a little too often just now; we are determined to put a stop to it. In this case the forgery is an unusually good one—or bad one; it is made out on the official form that can have been procured only from the office of the Governor-General of Oofa. Now I believe—I speak with reservation—but I believe it might help the lady’s case considerably by your disclosing how and through whom this document was procured.”

“The lady has absolutely no knowledge whatever of how the passport was procured,” said Jonathan steadily.

“Though you yourself have!”

“I have not.”

“You refuse to say?”

“I have said that I am ignorant as to how the thing was procured. And did I know, I am barely so foolish as to imagine

that the fact of my telling you would in the slightest degree benefit the lady."

"As you please."

"It is," returned Jonathan.

"You yourself will be conducted to the frontier; my lieutenant will accompany you. Your surmise was correct—you are dismissed from Russia; and under no circumstances whatever will you be permitted to re-enter the country." The General folded up the paper and rose from his chair. Jonathan bowed; it was exactly what he had expected.

"Did I mention," added the General, pausing for a moment by the door, which his subordinate deferentially held open for him; "did I mention that you will leave by the courier train to-night?—at eight o'clock precisely." Then the door closed.

It was only what he had expected, yes—but was he never to see her again? He bowed his head upon his arms folded on the table.

Half-an-hour later the door opened

again and the Lieutenant re-entered.

"General Arsenieff has given permission to the lady to see you for a few moments" said he.

Following the man through narrow, white-washed brick passages, he was taken into a room where sat an elderly woman wearing a dark shawl over her head and shoulders. The latter put down her sewing on seeing him, and at once ushered him into an inner room. By the sparse light which two candles could give in a fairly large room he saw Yelaina, standing by a small table, one hand resting upon it, waiting for him.

"Yelaina, what is it?" he cried, grasping her hands. He saw that she was pale, with tired lines about her eyes and lips, though she appeared to be quite calm.

"I could beg just three minutes," she said in a low, steady voice; "and all we say will probably be heard, so——"

"Yelaina, tell me what it is," he entreated.

"I am accused of causing unrest among the people, and I am to be sent—where I can do so no more."

"Siberia?"

She nodded.

His lips were dry; and for a moment there was silence.

"And I cannot go with you!" he faltered.

"No, no; how could you? Besides, you are to be dismissed from Russia—I learnt that from the wardress out there. But don't be troubled, my dear one; it may not be so terrible."

"How could it be worse?"

"You do not know—I am not to be sent to prison; I am to travel with no indignities. He—Paul Alexandritch—has done that for me."

"Tell me all."

"I am to be taken to Tiumen, and from there I am to be placed in a village; what means I have are reserved to me; only—only I must live in the village."

"How long—for how long?"

"That I do not know; there are other things. I am suspected of belonging to some society; they urged me to disclose what I knew—but even if I would, how could I? I know no societies."

"And the passport—I forgot to destroy it," he cried.

"It could make no difference; don't speak of it," she answered hurriedly.

"I think," he said slowly, "I would rather know you were dead."

"It seemed like death at first; but had it been otherwise, our lives would still have been apart; and—and see, our time is already up." Her lips were trembling; her fortitude was leaving her. She buried her face in her hands and lay sobbing on his breast.

"I will not leave you!" he said.

"Yes, yes," she cried wildly; "you must go back to England—and the land will divide us—and the sea—and you must not think of me any more—but I—oh, I will

think of you always—you shall be as a God to me in my darkness.”

A knock came at the door.

“Don’t let them come in—oh, don’t let them come in!” she whispered, trembling. His head sank to hers; he kissed her eyes, her mouth and hair.

“You must please come now,” said the wardress.

And he was led back through the white-washed passages to his room, and an hour later was being driven, the Lieutenant by his side, to the Nicolievski railway station.

Through the night air came strains of martial music. At the entrance to the great station their droshki was stopped; the square itself was lined with soldiers; a detachment of Guards stood at the salute, while its band crashed out the Russian Anthem—perhaps the mightiest hymn men have listened to—full of Sovereignty, of Purple and Gold, and the Divine Right of Kings. Outside the people

stood bareheaded. A Grand Duke was arriving or departing.

But as regards this Divine Right, its Divinity would seem to need some nursing: within sound of the glittering square lay a woman face downwards on her bed, sobbing hopelessly, the light of life to be taken from her, lest haply she might in some remote degree quiver the fringe of its Divineness.

XVI

OUT of the infinitely remote causes which conditioned the atmospheric currents that brought down the storm around Oofa on that late October night was born the failure of Jonathan and Yelaina to elude the officers. Barely an hour after they had left the house, Ba-reetsa and Anna Andreaovna, taking Liza with them, set out for Nijni. From an upper window Varvara and Herr Julius had watched them drive out of the stable-yard into the shrouding storm. Shortly afterwards Herr Julius also left; Varvara insisting that there was no need for him waiting. The officers would probably not stir till morning, and in any case they would not interfere with her. So Varvara was left alone; and there began a period of silent nerve-straining waiting.

She sat listening with nerves that magnified each sound of the night and set her heart beating with a palpitation that moved her in her chair. Facts lost their proportions; the world consisted alone of the two men asleep upstairs and the two sledges out in the night. The noise of her beating heart became the thud of galloping hoofs upon the snow, and she began to dread its ceasing, for every beat sped the sledges on their journey. As she sat in the silence the long nights before Anuta was born came back to her; when the secret burden was her own and she had ceased to pray, so hopeless did it seem for prayer to help her; when she had longed only to die that her baby might never be born. And now, an old woman, she was praying for protection for that child out in the night.

Surely that was the officers stirring? She sprang to her feet and listened; but her heart beat so loudly that her hearing was confused. No, it was nothing! And

she sank back into her chair again. The horses were galloping faster—or was it her heart? They were dragging her away and she could not hold them. She was floating between the two sledges which traveled in parallel lines so near together that as she glided along between them she could hold out a hand to each. The motion made her drowsy, and she fell asleep.

Again the noises in the house!—but she was falling—she called out, and hands from the sledges closed over her. They were rough hands that shook her; and she awoke. The elder of the two officers was shaking her by the arm. His loud, excited voice brought her fully awake.

“Madame Mardova is gone!” he was shouting. “Wake up, you old devil! Where is she?”

“Ask in the stables,” she said, as she was dragged to her feet. “They will tell you her sledge left more than an hour ago!”

“It’s all right!” cried the younger officer, hurrying into the room from the

stables, "she is making for Nijni! Come on."

They hurried away, and Varvara, listening, heard the clamor from the stables, as their sledge was prepared, settle into silence after they had gone.

All that day the house lay hidden in the storm; and for three days no news came from without. The night of the third day brought old Ivan with his report of the fugitives having reached Borogooslan in safety though a day late; and after midnight Bareetsa and Anna Andreaovna returned. They had the same disheartening tale—held back by the storm, and horsekeepers afraid to let their animals out on such a night. So that on the second afternoon, with only a hundred and forty miles covered, as they waited for horses at a posting-station, the officers had overtaken them. The latter, seeing they had been misled, had taken the only horses to be had and hurriedly left in the direction of the railway, leaving Bareetsa

and Anna to comfort themselves as best they might with the thought that probably by now Yelaina might be twenty-four hours ahead.

Ivan's story of the night's delay destroyed that hope, however, and they sat in Varvara's parlor silent and hopeless.

"They might not reach the railway in time," said Varvara faintly.

"We can hardly count on that, I fear they would join the very train," answered Bareetsa, who now looked tired and old.

For a week no further news reached them. Herr Julius was kept busy about the closing down of the mine. There was some grumbling among the peasants. Yelaina Grigorovna had opened the mine for her pastime, they said, and having tired of her toy had now gone back to Petersburg to enjoy herself, and this, too, at the beginning of winter, when they needed help the most. But as the week grew the grumblers had fewer listeners;

rumors of something darker were heard. But Herr Julius was a stern disciplinarian; he went about his work and no one grumbled within his hearing. Then one morning, while he was at breakfast, Koolic announced Andrea Andreaitch. The intendant looked heavy with the responsibility of dark news.

"You have heard?" asked he.

"Heard what?" said Herr Julius.

"Yelaina Grigorovna is to be sent to Siberia!"

Herr Julius inhaled a deep breath from his cigarette and made no reply, but continued his walk to and fro by the table upon which stood his glass of tea. Andreaitch stood by the stove warming his hands.

"Paul Alexandritch," he went on, "is heartbroken; his letter is so disjointed I could hardly make it out—his instructions, however, are explicit enough. I have just been to the House to inform them. Paul Alexandritch seems to think

Varvara Stepanovna a good deal to blame, you know. But whatever way, he seems just heart-broken."

"I do not believe dot Paul Alexandritch iss heart-broken; nor do you, my friend," said Herr Julius. "But what Paul Alexandritch says or thinks matters not—he iss a poor man iss Paul Alexandritch."

"I would remind you that what Paul Alexandritch says matters here everything in the world, both to you and me. And he instructs me," Andreaitch turned over the pages of the letter as if in search of some special point, "he instructs me to close the mine at once; everything is to be left just as before this foolish business began."

"Der mine iss closed," snapped Herr Julius.

"And the men—have they been dismissed?"

"Der iss only Peotra—I pay him to-day."

“Then—my instructions apply to yourself as well. Paul Alexandritch wishes this house to be closed at once. He is very just; I am to pay all monies due, so if there are any wages owing to you——”

“Der iss no money owing me,” returned Herr Julius, his face flushed and swelling with anger, “und iff there wass I would take no money from your hands.”

Andreaitch shrugged his shoulders and gently smiled.

“Then you will not forget that this house is to be closed at once—to-day?”

“So, so. But for der present diss house iss mine, und you will oblige me by—by going forth you—you cat,” spluttered Herr Julius, pointing to the door. He had paused for a harder word but none had come, and he broke into incoherent German.

Andreaitch was a timid man, so he hurriedly made for the door, calling over his shoulder—

"If you need horses get them from the village, we have none to spare for you here."

As soon as he was gone Herr Julius brought from his bedroom a damp towel and walked the floor mopping his face and neck; then he counted out some money from a drawer, put on his hat—an old student's cap which looked absurdly small perched over his flushed and excited face—and went out to the mine. When he returned, an hour later, the last of the men had been paid off and the mine was left once more to its old stillness.

But Herr Julius made no preparations for his own departure. Instead, he poured himself out a glass of vodka and, standing by the cupboard while he drank it, counted over the remaining stock of spirits. There were two full bottles and part of a third. One of these he placed on the table, and calling Koolic, dispatched him for a further supply.

For more than an hour the quiet of the room was broken only by an occasional deep-drawn breath. Then he began to drink, to drink steadily. So that when, towards evening, Koolic returned, the Tartar hesitated to enter the room and placed the stone jar within the doorway while he waited for further orders. Herr Julius waved him away.

Two mornings later old Seraphima presented herself at the Big House and reported that Herr Julius was ill. All night he had been stamping about his room, and when he was not shouting aloud he was chattering to himself in a way that was dreadful to hear; there had been sounds of furniture being dragged along the floor and of the breaking of glass, so that she and Koolic dared not sleep but had sat up all night listening to him. Varvara knew not what to do, and there was none to advise her. But she threw on a cloak and returned with Seraphima.

A low muttering came from the room. "Is there some one with him?" asked Varvara tremulously.

"No, he would allow no one to see him," Seraphima said.

The sound ceased for awhile; so, with trembling hands, Varvara opened the door. The divan had been dragged across a corner of the room as if for a barricade, and behind it lay Herr Julius, unconscious, dressed in his shirt and trousers only, his bare feet bleeding, cut by the broken glass that littered the floor.

They got him to bed, where he lay without sound or movement; Varvara sitting by him till night, when Bareetsa came to relieve her. Early the following morning he awoke and asked to be allowed to go back to Petersburg, but he was too weak and shaken to travel. However, as Andraitch insisted upon having the house closed, Herr Julius was carried over to the Big House. And it was a full week later, on a brilliant frosty morning, before

Herr Julius, humbled now and sorrowful, bade them good-by and set out for Petersburg.

XVII

ON a damp, still evening in September Jonathan Forty was walking leisurely beneath the trees in Kensington Gardens. The incidents of the summer at Mardova lay eight years behind; boys then at school were now men of affairs; young ladies then with their hair in pigtails now gave orders to their nursemaids. The years had left their mark upon Jonathan, as well in the slight silvering of the hair as in other and more indefinite ways. As a man of action he had ceased to count. His clerks, through long habit, had come to regard their two hours spent over luncheon as their right, and to close the office at four-thirty of an afternoon as their duty. While many of his old clients still sought his advice, few new ones came. The mining world needed men of another

type now; and he had become more and more content to stand aside. To those about him his life appeared strangely narrow and lonely; among his few friends there was none with whom he was intimate; and though his active interest in his profession grew less and less, he was rarely absent from his rooms over his office in King George's Place, save on his short visits to Kirkthorp.

When, eight years ago, he parted from his conductors on the frontier of Russia he had gone to the South of Spain, finding his excuse in some trivial business matter there; and in the warmth and the sun, the primitive minds of the people and their quiet ways, had felt himself not perhaps quite so utterly and hopelessly distant from her as he would have felt in clean-collared England. Teresa wrote advising him to take a long holiday; he was not so far from them as when in Russia; "the sea washing into Kirkthorp Bay stretches straight to you on the coast of Spain."

So it had been the following summer before he returned to England.

News came to him occasionally from Russia. Herr Julius was back in his old post at the paper works in Petersburg, and from the tone of his letters appeared to have settled down. He had taken a small house, which Varvara Stepanovna had come from Oofa to keep for him. Later, Jonathan heard of Bareetsa and Anna being in Petersburg to be near Vanooshka, who was entered at the University. But Vanooshka's time at the University was short; he outgrew his strength, and was taken to the Crimea, which he never left, and he now lay there in a hill-side cemetery overlooking the sea.

But through it all came no news of Yelaina. A little over a year ago Herr Julius had written of the death of Monsieur Mardoff; he had died suddenly in one of the corridors of the Imperial Theater, where he had been in attendance on a Grand Duke. Upon the receipt of this

letter Jonathan wrote Herr Julius, begging him to endeavor to learn news of Yelaina; should other means fail, he suggested that a trustworthy person might be dispatched to Siberia to glean news on the spot; they could draw upon him for whatever means might be needed; only to send him news, however slight, of Yelaina. But no answer came to his letter, and since then no news in any shape had reached him from Russia. Under the unaccountable silence Jonathan grew restless; he lost even the semblance of interest in his work, and after a visit to Kirkthorp had decided to give the business, while yet anything remained of it, into the hands of his assistants. And now he had signed the deed which by the end of the present month would put him, while yet something under forty, to one side, out of harness.

And as he looked up at the motionless trees, each one so still that they seemed asleep in the damp September dusk, he felt that another phase of his life was be-

ginning; a phase that might lead him far, and be, perhaps, the last phase of all.

A warm rain had begun to fall, and as he passed out of the gardens into the lighted streets the lamps threw long shining pathways before him on the wet pavement. On turning into King George's Place he found that the gleaming reflection from the lamp higher up the street had for companion a long, dark shadow, which, on lowering his umbrella to shade his eyes, he saw was cast by a dark figure by his own door. The man wore a long, straight overcoat and soft felt hat, both obviously of foreign fashion. As Jonathan paused by the door the figure turned.

"Herr Julius!"

"*Zdrastweety*, Ivan Daviditch!" said Herr Julius stolidly, raising his hat.

"When—how long have you been here?"

"I landed," returned Herr Julius, pausing as if to remember precisely, "let me see—it wass yesterday."

“And you are only here now!”

“I must first find a lodgment.”

“But your lodging is here. You landed yesterday—and I not to know!”

By this they had got upstairs to Jonathan's sitting-room, and Herr Julius was placed in an arm-chair drawn up to the fire, which Jonathan was vigorously poking into a blaze.

“And have you—I mean you are not going off again—you are come——”

“I wass in Koln,” replied Herr Julius quietly, “und I wish to see udder places—perhaps Sud Africa—so I come on here.”

“South Africa? Yes, yes. But let me see about something to eat.” So the housekeeper was called, and a messenger was dispatched for Herr Julius' luggage; he was dispatched in a cab, but the cab proved wholly unnecessary, for Herr Julius' possessions consisted only of one small rush-woven bag but one size larger than a small handbag.

Over supper Jonathan learned some of

the history of the past year. Varvara Stepanovna was dead; she had died more than a year ago. Bareetsa and Anna were away at the time, gone on a long journey. Herr Julius appeared not quite at ease in saying this, pausing frequently as if to choose his words. It was on a holiday, and Varvara and he had been to one of the gardens; as they were returning in the evening she became ill—so ill that he drove to the nearest doctor's, but she died in his arms before the doctor saw her. "Ach! I could no longer bear to look upon der rooms. I left der paper works; I lost myself for a liddle—I wass in der hospital." Jonathan understood.

"Did you get my letter?" he asked gently.

"Which letter?"

"The one I wrote you about that time—in which I made a suggestion."

"What for a suggestion?"

"That you should take steps to learn news of Yelaina Grigorovna."

"I got no letter, I got no suggestion. I wass in der hospital."

"And Anna Andreaovna and Bareetsa?"

"They—wass on a journey."

Jonathan rose and went over to the fire; standing with his back to the room as he lighted a cigar, he said—

"And Yelaina Grigorovna—has nothing been heard of her?"

A large part of the room was reflected in the mirror in front of him; in it he saw a troubled look come over Herr Julius' face as he answered slowly—

"Yes—a liddle."

Jonathan turned and faced him.

"Tell me," he said simply.

"It wass last year," replied Herr Julius, nervously fingering the table-things near him; "it wass last year. Bareetsa he heard—I know not how—dot she wass in a village—a village called Sorrelka—so about seven hundred versts northeast of Tiumen—und they say she wass ill. Anna

Andreaovna say she will go to her, und they set out. Varvara Stepanovna she also wish to go, but we say no, the journey will be for her too long; for they go not straight, but so about, und stop at places, so no remark shall be made. They are back in Petersburg so about a week before I leave."

"They saw her?"

"Yes."

"She was ill?"

"No, not ill—but changed."

"Changed! Did they think to find her unchanged?" said Jonathan huskily. Then, relighting his cigar: "Did they bring any message from her?"

"There wass no message," replied Herr Julius stolidly.

Jonathan twisted a chair to the fire and sat down.

"I must go to her," he said.

"So iss impossible!"

"It is not; I am going to her."

"How will you go?"

“Go! A whole country cannot be caged and barred like a prison! Sorrelka—seven hundred versts northeast of Tiumen.”

“Ach! talk of it no more to-night; to-morrow you will see it iss impossible; harm would come of it.”

“Tell me this: could my going bring harm to her?”

Herr Julius rose and stood by Jonathan’s chair.

“Ach! Ivan Daviditch, you are not happy—you grow old quick—but it iss for no use to go; you would haff no more happiness at all left.”

Jonathan looked up affectionately into the German’s face.

“As you say, there is no need to talk about it to-night.”

Shortly before noon on the following day Jonathan walked with, for him, rapid steps along Jermyn Street, and turned in at a shabby entrance which gave access on the second floor to a somewhat gorgeous

suite of rooms. These were occupied by a Mr. Saintbury Joseph Hummill, whose father was proprietor of *The New York and Eastern States Review*, of which journal Mr. Hummill, junior, was the London correspondent. Mr. Hummill—a clean-shaven young man who, while priding himself upon being a hard-bitted American, was in reality as impressionable as a child—was smoking his after-breakfast cigarette when his visitor was shown in. Jonathan's business lay too near to his heart to be dallied with, so he made no pretense of a casual call.

"Hummill," he said, taking a chair by the breakfast-table, "you used to ask me to write you some papers about Russia."

"Yes. You will do them?"

"On conditions."

"What are they?"

"You must first hear my reasons for making them. I have a friend in exile—in Siberia—not in prison; no Nihilism or anything of that sort. I must see her.

I am going to Russia for that purpose—you understand?" Saintbury Hummill nodded. "You know Russia is barred to me? During the past six years I have applied three times for permission to return to the country, and each time it has been refused. It is of no use applying further; besides, I do not wish to bring my name before them just now. I want to be an American citizen for a while, under any name you please. What I wish you to do is this: Ask your people to get a passport for a member of their staff—an American citizen—to travel in Russia; and you shall have your articles."

Saintbury Hummill sat looking out of the window, rather overdoing an affectation of indifference; he felt there was more in this than had been put into words, and was anxious to avoid even the appearance of wishing to know more than he was meant to know. But the thing hinted at adventure, perhaps romance, and he was interested.

"It might be managed," he said at length. "But if the thing came out, you know, it would not add to the credit of the *Review*. What?"

"The risk is much smaller than you think. I shall take every precaution—not stop long in one place; even at—at my destination a few hours perhaps will suffice."

"Well," replied Hummill, pushing the cigarettes across, "the *Review* owes you something, you know; that information about the bogus Peruvians was a great thing. I will put it to my people."

"Will you cable?"

"Yes, and ask them to cable their reply."

In twenty-four hours it came. The offer was accepted, and the necessary papers were to be sent on as soon as possible.

However, three weeks passed before they arrived, but they were not passed impatiently so far as Jonathan was concerned. To know that he was surely go-

ing to her was enough in the meantime. And a change came over him. The weather was delightful—a succession of warm, still days of golden haze. He found a subtle joy in taking Herr Julius on little excursions; a joy in going out together in the mornings and coming in together at nights; little things interested him and a wider sympathy came for those about him, as he felt how their lives would go on in daily routine of dull, unchanging needs, with no great joyous thing awaiting them such as awaited him. The joy was so certain that he could wait for it.

During the third week he took Herr Julius to Kirkthorp, where for the first two days the latter remained obstinately taciturn, proffering no remarks and answering monosyllabically. He seemed to retire into himself while he viewed his surroundings; and, lest a word of his might disturb the gentle atmosphere about him, took shelter in moroseness. Ressay pronounced him “very German.” On the

third day he unbent, and in a couple of hours was as one of the household. He interested himself in trivial matters, knew all about housekeeping, and advised upon it with an originality that kept Teresa in a ripple of laughter. Then he fell to arguing with Uncle Phineas with such genial philosophy that the latter went about simply beaming with friendliness. Jonathan watched it with quiet joy, a strange tenderness in his heart, softened and strengthened with the hope within him. He did not speak of his coming journey till the last night of their stay, then, after Herr Julius had retired for the night and they were alone in the study, he mentioned it, saying that he expected to be back before Christmas. Teresa laid her hand within his for a moment, while Uncle Phineas said, somewhat hesitatingly, that he was glad he was not to be away for long. But later, when they knelt in prayers, the old man prayed earnestly for guid-

ance and protection for him who was as his son; that he might be given strength in spirit and body; that he might go in safety and return in happiness; "and for her who hath been put into exile and is alone, grant her, Lord, of Thy dear strength, for she hath known both tribulation and sorrow."

On their return to King George's Place the passport, vised and in order, had arrived.

"So," said Herr Julius, "then you will set out. Ach! Ivan Daviditch, do not go—do not go to Siberia. It iss of no use—you will come back ferry old."

Jonathan pressed the hand which Herr Julius held out to him.

"I must go," he answered. "Think what these years must have been to her! What have they been to me? Yes, I know what is said in such cases—unmanly wasting one's life for a love; well, let it be so said, even though it argues life to be

a worthier thing than love. But for eight years life has gone but poorly with me, and now I am going to her.”

He went to his room, and Herr Julius, left alone, paced the floor moodily. “Ach! it will not be goot for him—no, it will not be goot for him,” he muttered.

XVIII

AND now the journey was begun. Dawn was breaking over the flats of Holland, and Jonathan sat watching from the train the canals and ditches, the embankments and straight lonely avenues revolve past him as the spokes of a wheel; feeling nearer to her out of all proportion to the distance left behind in the night; for the sea was passed and the solid earth now stretched away in one unbroken sweep to her. He looked at the pink in the east, towards which he was rushing, and the thought that the sun now about to rise to him must be to her near its setting brought keenly home to him the long, long miles that lay between. She would not know he was coming. He sat quite still, with no wish to move or read or even to think clearly, the consciousness that he

was going to her was enough. And in the slackened will of semi-sleep, lulled by the rumble of the wheels, he glided into thoughts of her such as for the past eight years he had not dared allow himself.

Late that night Berlin was reached, and next morning Warsaw left behind. At Alexandrovna his passport—he was described as Jonathan P. Sharman, an American citizen—was examined and returned without a question. Each hour was bearing him to her! Of the journey back, when and in what manner it would be made, he cared not to think.

At Moscow he learnt that the boats from Nijni to Perm were running only at irregular intervals, and at any moment might be ice-bound. Already there was floating ice in the river, and so uncertain was the passage that since the first of the month—it was now mid-October—the boats had ceased carrying the mails. He hurried on—merely crossing Moscow from station to station—to find at Nijni the fol-

lowing morning that things were in his favor. A boat was just about to start; its name, *The Morning*, attracted his glance as he went on board, as in harmony with his hopes.

Six days and nights upon the water, of pant and struggle, of slackening speed and going ahead, of black forests and dreary steppe—and Perm was reached. Another thirty-six hours of railway ease across the Oorals—then Tiumen, the end of the railway—Siberia.

So far he had traveled on without a break. Now, however, it would be wiser to move more slowly; to show no sign of haste nor of his journey having a definite point in view. Herr Julius had described Sorrelka as lying about seven hundred versts northeast of Tiumen; and upon inquiry Jonathan was told that the roads were good and the snow hard and as yet not too deep. He calculated that he could reach it in about three and a half days. But haste now would be rashness, and he

was under obligation to Saintbury Hummill to use every precaution possible. No, he would be patient, and allowing a week to cover the distance, would abide that night in Tiumen. So leisurely he set about the purchase of a traveling sledge, and by the afternoon his purchase stood in the squalid courtyard of the hotel, a rough, strong, leather-hooded thing. As he examined it that evening it seemed, even as himself, eager to be in motion, eager to be on its journey away to the northeast. Only seven hundred versts away—just there where the stars were beginning to shine. Why not call for horses and let each hour of the night bear him nearer to her? But his promise to Hummill! With less speed his end would be the more surely gained.

It was afternoon of the following day before he left Tiumen. The police, upon his arrival, had called for his passport and had been tardy in returning it, but now the sledge journey, the final stage, was begun.

And day followed day of vast distances; of frozen marsh and river; of distant village and lonely, snow-swept plain. Time ceased to be marked by hours—the changing of horses and drivers alone making any division. Tobolsk was left behind, and two days later Jonathan began guardedly to make inquiries of the drivers as to the whereabouts of Sorrelka. But none of them knew it or had even heard of it—until Tobolsk was four days behind, when, changing horses towards the close of the day, the driver said he had heard of it, but was very hazy as to its direction. By the following morning, however, he was well within the radius of its name, and by mid-day the driver said it was about fifty versts away. He had been to it last year, said the Tartar, as he harnessed up the fresh horses, and remembered it for two reasons, one, that he had driven a *troika* there, and people did not often pass that way with *troikas*—the folk going that road were “the unfortunates,” and they mostly went

on foot. Did the *barin* wish to go to Sorrelka? The road was bad, but he knew the way, and his horses could do it in one stage.

“Yes, to Sorrelka,” said Jonathan.

The sun had set, though it was yet quite light, when the driver, pointing ahead with his whip, said, “Sorrelka.”

The horses were pulled up. Slightly below, at the foot of some sloping ground, Jonathan could see an irregular cluster of wooden huts through which one long wide street cut. At the far end of this there appeared to be a few houses of a better class; one, at least, having its four-sided roof painted red, and with, as Jonathan thought, green-painted shutters; but these were almost lost among the mass of poorer dwellings. The general effect was of two straggling lines of gray hovels set on a wind-blown sea of frozen steppe.

For a few moments he sat silently gazing on the scene. Could it be that Yelaina had lived through eight years of life

in such a place? A feeling came that she was not there—could not be there! He turned to the driver and asked if there was a post-station where they could put up.

“No,” replied the man, but there were private horses to be had. Constantine Ivanitch had good horses, he knew. He had put up there last year when he had brought a *barin* and *barinya* here.

“A *barin* and *barinya*?”

“Yes; they went to that house there with the red roof. They kept me overnight, and I drove them back to Kushlinka next morning. I remember because all the way back the *barinya* was weeping.”

“Go on to Constantine Ivanitch’s,” said Jonathan shortly. The *barin* and *barinya* could only have been Anna and Bareetsa, and the red-roofed house was hers! So certain did he feel of this that he decided to make no further inquiry, but go on at once to the house. A few minutes later the sledge was drawn up in the snow-heaped courtyard of the horsekeeper, and

Jonathan was making his way up the silent street.

There was still light enough to enable almost the entire length of the road to be seen, for the sun had set in unusual splendor, and overhead the rare and wonderful green sheen of a northern sky was irradiating the squalid huts with so transforming a glory that for the moment they seemed other than the uncared-for dwelling-places of hopelessness. The entrance to the red-roofed house was by means of a short flight of wooden steps leading from a courtyard. The door at the top was padded and covered with coarse canvas on the outside, so that knocking with the hand upon it caused little effect. At length a small girl appeared from one of the outbuildings across the yard.

"The door is open, Feodra Ivanitch; go in," she cried, as she came toward him. Halfway up the steps she stopped with a look of surprise on her face. "Oh, I thought it was Feodra Ivanitch for his eve-

ning game of cards," she cried. Then without asking what he wanted, she pushed open the door and going along the inner passage called through the open door of a room from which came the faint glow of a lamp: "Here's a gentleman."

Jonathan followed and stood looking over her shoulder into the room. Beneath the lamp, suspended from a beam of the ceiling, stood a rough table upon which was a samovar and tea-things; behind the samovar was seated a woman of perhaps forty, in loose, untidy attire, who rose hastily at the little maid's announcement and peered anxiously into the passage. Jonathan moved into the room and stood within the circle of the lamp, while the woman, with one hand gripping the table to steady herself, stared at him in amazement.

"I—I am seeking Madame Mardova," said Jonathan, with difficulty controlling his voice to steadiness.

The woman half-turned and hastily

glanced into a part of the room beyond the circle of the lamp. Following her glance Jonathan saw a figure half-sitting, half-lying on a low chair and supported at one side by cushions against the wall. She wore a loose, untidy cotton wrapper; but in spite of the heaviness of figure he knew that it was Yelaina. He made a step toward her, when the woman raised her hand to keep him back.

“Stop!” she said hurriedly. “Who are you? What do you want?”

“I have come from England—to find Madame Mardova—I am an old friend of hers.”

A softer look came into the woman’s face.

“Sit down,” she said, lowering herself unsteadily into her chair, though still keeping her arm raised as a barrier until she saw that he, too, was seated. “Is your name Ivan Daviditch—Ivan Daviditch Forty?”

Jonathan bowed.

"Ah, then I know; you are an old lover of hers." The woman spoke without any trace of offensiveness.

"Madame Mardova's husband was living when I knew her," said Jonathan lamely.

"There is no need for social lies here—the place has that good; lies are of no value here, so we do not use them. I heard your name a year ago—though I have heard it often enough since. You were her lover, I say."

"As you will," returned Jonathan huskily. "She has spoken of me, you say?"

"I should think almost daily for a year past. But tell me, how and why have you come here—where are your horses?"

"At Constantine's, lower down the street."

"You know, of course, you will not be allowed to stay here?"

"I am aware of that—I did not think to stay."

"Still, the *Ispravnick* is at another vil-

lage to-day and will not be back till the morning; you will be right till then."

She brought a glass and saucer from a cupboard and handed him some tea.

"Don't waken her, please," she said, motioning towards where Yelaina lay. "I will see about some supper—we don't starve here, you know; and there is a room we can offer you." She moved unsteadily to the door. "Now, please, don't wake her—it would be of no use."

Jonathan rose and quietly pushed aside his chair.

"Tell me—is she ill?" he asked huskily.

"She is well enough—but we don't keep Petersburg manners here; a few years of this life and one's nerves call for something more soothing than Petersburg polish." The woman muttered this over her shoulder as she left the room. Her voice was so thick and the words so ill-pronounced that Jonathan only half grasped their sense; he gathered, however, that Yelaina was well;

and as the woman's steps went shuffling down the passage, he noiselessly crossed the floor and stood before the sleeping figure in the chair. Perhaps his nerves were overstrained by the sleepless nights of the long sledge journey, but as he stood tears gathered in his eyes, brimmed over and fell upon the floor at her feet. She lay in a posture of utter unconsciousness—one foot outstretched, the other bent beneath her chair; one hand was placed beneath her cheek on the cushion, the other lay lifelessly on her lap; the sleeves of her wrapper, edged with tattered lace, fell wide from the elbow, leaving the lower arm bare. The whole figure was heavier and fuller—much fuller; this was even more noticeable in her face and throat, from which almost all trace of the old graciousness of chiseling had gone, while her mouth—the once beautiful mouth—seemed to be swollen and twisted, though possibly this was partly caused by her posture; from

the lower corner of the pale lips a tiny streak of moisture oozed, making a dark stain on the cushion.

An hour passed, Jonathan sat by the table and watched her sleep; his own breathing contracted in his strained listening to hers. The other woman had not returned, and there was no sound of any one moving in the house. Another hour passed, and the stillness and the silence so worked upon him that he felt unable any longer to bear it. He rose and knelt by her chair.

"Yelaina!" he said softly, bending over her and gently touching her lips with his own. She moved her face and slightly altered her position, but did not wake. He knelt by her for some minutes before he slowly went back to his seat by the table. A doubt which had been subconsciously with him during the silence, a thing, perhaps, born of the other woman's manner as she had left the room, was now a certainty. He knew Yelaina's sleep to

be the heavy unconsciousness of intoxication.

There was a shuffling in the passage; the woman, followed by the little girl, was bringing in supper.

"Perhaps we might wake her now," she said; and having put down the tray she gently shook Yelaina's arm.

"Stay," whispered Jonathan, "you had better prepare her first for my being here. Tell her I have been sitting by her—tell her I have come just as I was eight years ago."

He went out into the passage; he opened the outer door and stood looking out into the night. Fine snow blew against his face, and the keen air rushed noisily through the house. The woman's voice called out for the door to be closed; so closing it he remained standing in a shaded part of the passage. He could notice its detail. While the thick logs of the walls had been left in their original roughness, the packing of moss stemmed between

each log looking brown and dusty, there yet at one time had been some attempt at decoration. The floor had been painted with yellow polish, evidently not renewed for years past, and it was trodden through to the bare wood in little tracks leading to the various doors. He found himself counting the latter; on the left there were three; one, belonging to the room where he had been, standing open and through which came occasional sounds of a subdued voice. On the right he counted four, all at equal distances apart, probably opening into sleeping-rooms. They all showed signs of some one's care, for they had once been painted white, though the paint was now almost gone, and were fitted with heavy, curved brass handles, such as in England one finds on the doors of prosperous insurance offices.

The woman appeared, beckoning to him.

"She doesn't understand, or doesn't believe, I don't know which."

He followed her into the room. Yelaina was standing with one hand supporting herself against the wall. She looked at him wildly, her mouth opening and shutting rapidly, though no sound came from her lips. He took her in his arms.

“Yelaina—speak to me!”

She lay heavily in his arms, her eyes gazing vacantly over his shoulder at the opposite wall, her mouth still working convulsively. Then she pushed him aside.

“Masha, come here, I want you.”

The woman approached; Yelaina clung to her arm and slowly pointed to where Jonathan stood.

“Don’t you know him?” asked Masha gently. “It is the Englishman you have told me about.”

“No—he is older. Take me to my room—I want to go to my room.”

Masha took her gently by the arm; but after a moment was as gently pushed aside again, and Yelaina held out her arms vacantly to the room.

"You lead her," whispered Masha, "I will show you the way."

Tenderly he placed his arm about her and led her across the room; as they passed where the light of the lamp fell brightest she stopped and, raising her hand slowly, touched his face.

"Yelaina, do you not know me?—speak to me," he said gently, looking into her face when they had reached the door of the room across the passage.

"Leave her for to-night," whispered Masha from within the room; so he left her. But a sound made him turn; she had sunk to the floor and lay shivering in a crouching attitude. They ran to her and together bore her to the little bed that stood beneath the sloping ceiling.

"She will be all right in the morning; leave her with me," said Masha, who seemed now to be clear-headed and practical. Following him from the room she pointed to the door further along the passage. "That is your room; you will find a

light there, but you had better put it out as soon as possible; had our *Ispravnick* been at home we should have had him here before this. Good-night."

The room that Masha indicated was furnished with a low, narrow bed and a couple of chairs. Upon one of the latter stood a lighted candle, which, remembering the warning, Jonathan at once extinguished. A faint sheen from the snow, coming in through the curtainless window, relieved the room from complete darkness. He groped his way to the chair by the bed, and in the shimmering pearly darkness sat down to think, conscious that he was achingly weary. It would be, perhaps, hardly true to say that he had experienced any shock; he knew too well the inevitable outcome—oftenest the merciful outcome—of exile in these villages of isolation. When men of strong fiber were soon broken, what hope was there for a woman's frailer nerves and body? He knew that to more than half of the women sent there

a few years brought the merciful ease of madness; while almost all were sooner or later broken with a hysteria that was little short of madness. His heart rose in rebellion against the systems of men. Why should one living being be crushed and broken to others' creed of right and wrong? Man, the individual, loved justice and not oppression; it was man in the mass, in his self-preserving fear and blind will to protect that timorous mass, who was ruthless! It was not Yelaina he had found, but a thing, once a beautiful, almost perfect bit of life, that had been bruised and crushed into an ill-fitting mold. In Jonathan's heart was no lessening of his love for her; he was only resolutely resolved to protect and save her; and in his brain was slowly formed a scheme to take her away from this devastating place. And his old clearness of purpose returned to him. Before he lay down on the bed he had shaped his plans into detail. It was unlikely that he would be allowed to stay

beyond a few hours next morning, indeed it would be unwise to do so; unwise to be seen by the *Ispravnik*. He must go back to Petersburg and find Bareetsa. He was thankful now that he had asked Herr Julius to stay on at King George's Place till his return, for now he could wire there for Bareetsa's address. Once before Bareetsa had procured a passport, and could doubtless do so again. It would, of course, be safer to return to England and make the journey to Siberia via Japan and Vladivostock, but time made that impossible; he must come back by the shortest way. His present passport would remain good for six months, after which it would have to be supplemented by a Russian one, with the further risk of a special permit to leave the country. No, not a day must be lost; he must return at once! Yelaina, warned when to expect him, could easily at night slip out to him waiting for her outside the gates. Other clothes for her he would bring with him, and then as his wife

they would travel together openly. Better not go to Vladivostock, that might be dangerous; there should be little danger, however, in crossing into Manchuria, and thence to Peking, where they would stay only long enough for their marriage at the Consulate; and then—the wide sea before them.

XIX

THE late dawn had broken some hours when a touch upon his arm awoke him; a glass of tea and some ring-biscuits had been put on the chair by his bed, and near the door, but half-turned towards him, stood Yelaina. He sprang up, and before she could reach the door caught her in his arms. For a moment she shivered under his kisses on her face and hair, then struggling free she stood shrinking by the wall.

“I did not mean to see you again,” she said, “but Masha told me you had not stirred, though it is past ten, and I grew afraid—I brought you some tea.”

For a while he could not speak; his heart was beating up into his throat; she was the Yelaina of old again. The marks of the past eight years were softened by

the shadow in which she stood; her hair, showing only a few threads of silver, was coiled in the old way; instead of the wrapper of the night before she wore a plain dark dress relieved by a knot of pink ribbon at the throat.

She moved toward the door.

“Do not go—Yelaina—see, I will stand here and will not even touch you if you wish it so,” he said pleadingly.

She hesitated, then with her eyes upon the floor slowly returned within the shadow of the wall.

“Why have you come?” she asked in a low voice.

“Why have I left you so long, Yelaina? Why did I not come sooner? Rather blame me for that. It is only a month since I knew where you were.”

“I ought to thank you—I think I do thank you—but it can do no good.”

“Yelaina, we are going to be together now—we are going away together.”

She half-raised her eyes, but dropped them again with a slight tremor of the lids, and stood motionless. ‘

“Listen, we must get away from here; we are going to get away. I will be back here in even less than a month’s time and you must be ready for me!”

“You will not return. You will never come back here—and I do not wish it—you do not know.”

“I think I do,” he said gently. “But you are ill—if you had not been brave, as I knew you would be, you could not have lived through these dreadful years.”

“No, you do not know,” she said, speaking in a dull, level voice; “perhaps it was the silence and the distance; I tried to be brave; I made a garden and had flowers, I—I painted the rooms—but nothing mattered—only the silence and the long, dreadful nights, when I was afraid to breathe or move lest something heard. Then Masha came.”

He made a movement towards her, but seeing her shrink from him remained where he was, saying hurriedly—

“See, I am not going back to England, only to Petersburg for our passports and to make arrangements; I will send you word and after dark you will steal out to me at the gates; you need bring nothing with you—I shall have everything. And we will travel openly and cross into Manchuria, and at the first British Consulate we will be married.”

“You will not return; I do not wish it,” she repeated, “I would rather you had never come. But perhaps even that does not matter now. Yes. I have been ill; I have watched the crosses grow out there and prayed that mine might be the next—but I gave up praying—good and ill are but names to me now.”

She leaned her shoulder against the wall while tears trickled down into the corners of her mouth. She appeared faint; he

sprang to her and took her in his arms. A stealthy knocking came at the door; Masha's voice was whispering that the *Ispravnick* had come demanding to know who was in the house. "I told him an Englishman passing through the village, but he wants the passport!"

"Tell him my things are at the horse-keeper's, my papers are in order; ask him to wait for me there," Jonathan called.

"Go—go," she said, looking up in terror.

"You must come now," Masha was whispering.

"Tell me that you understand I will return, Yelaina—tell me you believe it!"

"Go—go," she moaned.

"Tell me that you believe me!" he cried again, almost fiercely.

"I believe that if we are both alive you will return," she answered.

The door was flung open and the

Ispravnick stood in the doorway, and a moment later she was standing in the room alone, dazed and shivering, a last kiss stinging on her lips. She drooped into a chair and watched his figure go down the street. Half-an-hour later she saw a sledge come from the horsekeeper's and pass out through the village gate; her gaze followed it until it passed beyond the line where the snow and sky met.

The house was as silent as the deserted street. From time to time little eddies of air outside swept the whiter patches of more recent snow in curving races along the beaten brown ruts of the road, and invisibly stirred a loosened pane in the casement with a sound which but punctuated the silence. The gray day moved on. During the afternoon a sound of low chanting came suddenly from lower down the street, neither rising nor falling but monotonously keeping time to the tramp of tired men. A batch of convicts were chanting the *Milosirdnaya* as they passed

through the village. The charity hymn for alms came as a litany into the room.

“ Help, oh my brothers, help the ‘unfortunates,’
Lord God look down on us; lighten the road,
The dark road of Siberia.” ¹

Opposite the window one of the gang broke from the ranks holding out a ragged cap for alms; but the window was sealed, and Yelaina could only shrink back into the shadow. And the hymn died away as she heard the heavy wooden gate at the top of the street swing to as the convicts passed out upon the steppe.

In her movement back from the window her hand caught the knot of ribbon at her throat, and but slightly fastened as it was, it fluttered to the ground. That morning on first awaking and realizing that Jonathan was really come, had slept under the same roof, that shortly she would see him and hear again the well-remem-

¹ From a translation by Mr. Harry De Windt, who has kindly allowed the author to use his lines.

bered manner of his speech that she loved so well, it seemed to Yelaina as if all the misery of these eight years had never been, so little had they power to touch her now that he was come. She felt almost as of old. As a woman she knew how her beauty had touched him, and though she no longer could be beautiful, she would go to him as much like the Yelaina of old as she could make herself. Out of her slender stock of draperies which she had brought with her one gown of dark material alone remained. This she brought from a box and with a few touches it was made to fit her figure as at first. She coiled up her hair in the old way; in spite of its touches of silver it was still abundant enough heavily to shade her ears. On surveying herself she decided that the dark dress needed a relief of color; so she sought out her remaining remnants of ribbon and formed them into a loose knot of pink which she fastened at her throat. The box

further produced a pair of slippers—things with paste buckles and arching insteps; and as she left the room more than the mere memory of her old gracious beauty went with her.

It was only after the meager breakfast had been eaten and Masha had done exclaiming and kissing her and had left her, when she was sitting listening and waiting for sounds of Jonathan stirring, that the past began to take on a new aspect to her. The intoxication of the previous night was no isolated thing. For more than a year now no day had worn to afternoon without finding her more or less under the influence of vodka—not the corn-brandy of the towns, but a crude, biting potato spirit, the only spirit within reach of purchase. Some months, perhaps a year, before Masha had come the haunting fear of madness had come to Yelaina. The hysteria which had come about the end of her first year of exile, in spite of a brave fight

against it, slowly, month by month, had increased its hold upon her. For a long while she had been able to control it and keep it back during the early part of the day, but the strain of the changeless afternoons and the nervous terror of the silent nights left her weakened body less and less resistant; and her morning hours of control were slowly lessened until no hour of relief in the twenty-four was certainly left her. A little later exhaustion brought a rare day of relief, when she would lie quiescent, lethargic, and physically unable to move. It was during one of these intervals that she realized how near she must be to madness. The thought brought with it no sense of physical fear, but the overwrought brain saw another dread; if she became mad what might not happen? what might she not do? and with only hardened men to watch her madness. In her weakened state this dread was magnified, and it haunted her. Then Masha came, an exile who had found means of lulling quivering

nerves to rest. And among exiles Yelaina was rich, and potato spirit could be had for money. So day after day the rebellious nerves were stilled. There was no sense of sin in it nor of any shrinking or falling from duty; it was simply the sole weapon she could command by which she might hope for awhile to beat back the awful thing which haunted her—for awhile her reason might be spared her. If by man's laws it was sin, then as sin must be counted the anæsthesia of the surgeon's table. But beyond man's radius his empirical standards fail. And her existence now was a thing unto herself alone; a suffering something within the narrow space of her body. So, as she was conscious of no sin, her moral being, however it might be with the physical part of her, suffered no taint.

But now unexpectedly touched by the world again, sitting nervously listening for sounds of movement from the loved room, she began to judge herself by the standards of the world she had deemed

forgotten; and things took on a changed aspect. For awhile it overwhelmed and stunned her. But her newness of vision magnified what she looked at. What before had appeared sinless now frowned upon her as degradation and shame. It pierced her through and through, detached words broke from her lips; she sprang to her feet with closed hands pressed to her cheeks. "What have I done?" she moaned. Sinking again into her chair she flung her arms across the table and hid her face in almost unbearable anguish. She was a degraded drunkard, she told herself. At least it was still hers that her degradation was unto herself alone; she could still keep any other from bearing taint of it. She did not pause to remember that the mere odor of the thing she had daily used had to the last been revolting to her. Perhaps had she done so it would have weighed little with her in her present tense pain of remorse.

One hand crept slowly over her dress; then she rose and was moving toward the door when Masha entered.

"Where are you going?" she asked, noting the strangeness of the look on Yelaina's face.

"To change this dress."

"What! have you a better one? Are you not satisfied with it?"

"It is my best, but I am not satisfied with it; nor with this, nor this." She touched her hair and the ribbons at her breast. "I am going to put on what I wear every day."

"You are not; go and sit down," said Masha, for once feeling herself mentally the stronger of the two.

"No, Masha, let me go; what is the use of this mean lie? I have sinned enough—I will not paint my face as if for hire!"

Masha burst into a laugh.

"Dear Lord! and have you painted your face? Go and sit down, I tell you; there

is going to be no changing of that dress to-day!"

Yelaina hesitated, and stood for awhile drooping by the table. Perhaps a remnant of desire to look pleasing in his eyes still remained with her.

"It doesn't matter—it cannot alter anything," she answered wearily. So it was that she had crept to his door that morning, and when her knock had remained unanswered, had entered, bearing the tea.

And now he was gone, and the day had worn on to afternoon, and night was almost come again. She had not moved from her seat; her thoughts had been active only in a dull listless way in far-off memories of her father and her girlhood in Kazan. The world had gone from her now. Life, with its cautious gentilities pursued so ardently and its nebulous beliefs followed so falteringly, was far away from her. It meant now only this fading thing in her body which still hurt.

She rose and went along the passage to Masha's room. Though she knew in what state she would find her at this hour, she wished to say good-by to her, for Masha in her way had always been tender and kind. The noise of heavy breathing came in dull drone from the room; and in the dusk she could just discern Masha's burly form stretched upon the bed. For a moment she stood by her holding one of her helpless hands. "And that is how I have been," she thought. "Poor Masha!" Then stooping, she kissed the unconscious face, and went slowly back to her room.

The fire in the stove was almost out, but from a little pile of wood she made it up, and having opened the damper to its limit, the flames under the strong draught were soon noisily making the thin iron sheeting of the stove crackle under the expanding heat. By the light from the stove she wrote on a scrap of paper: "All that I have I leave to Masha." It sounded a little feeble she thought; but still if those who

had the ordering of things were wicked enough to ignore what she had written, putting it in more legal phraseology would not mend matters. Perhaps, however, it might gain obedience from the position in which it was found; so she pinned it at the head of the bed just where her head would be.

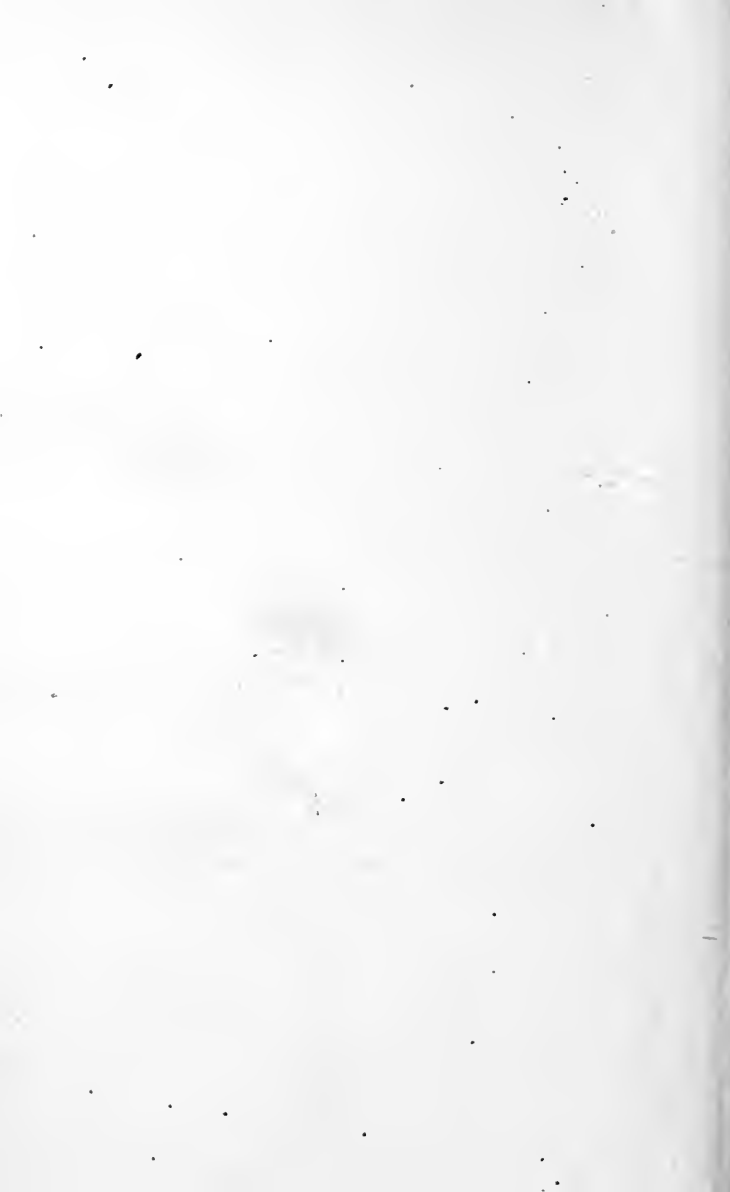
The stove had settled down into a red shimmering glow; the damper was now too hot to touch, so that she had to cover her hand before she could push it in and close the connection with the outer air. The sudden stoppage of the draught caused a puff of red sparks and feathery flakes of ash to belly out into the room. For awhile she stood wearily watching them, then crossing the room she lay down on the bed.

Within an hour the red embers had fallen to a little heap of feathery ashes which, from time to time, puffed into the room and, gently gyrating, fell softly upon the hearth.

Yet a couple of hours later the moon had

risen, and in the intense frost shone from out a cross of silver, and in its softening light, Sorrelka, a brown dot upon the great plain of snow, appeared almost beautiful.

THE END



THE PRONUNCIATION OF SOME OF THE NAMES IN THE BOOK

Yelaina Grigorovna Mardova	Yelain - a Grigor' - ovna Mar'-dova.
Paul Alexandritch Mardoff	Paul Alexand'-ritch Mar'- doff.
Anna Andreaovna	An'na Andrey'-ovna.
Varvara Stepanovna	Varvar'-a Stepan'-ovna.
Andrea Andreaitch	Andrey Andrey'-itch.
Marya Ivanovna	Mar-ya Eevan'-ovna.
Kireel Paulitch Bareetsa	Kireel Paul'-itch Bareet'-sa.
Ivan Daviditch	Eevan' David'-itch.
Vanooshka	Van'-ooshka.
Seraphima	Serapheem'-a.
Countess Valletski	Countess Vallet'-ski.
Colonel Lityainyiff	Colonel Lityain'-yiff.
Claudia Paulovna	Claudia Paul'-ovna.
General Arseneiff	General Arsen'-yeff.
Dr. Solomin	Dr. Solo'-min.
Liza	Lee'-za.
Peotra .	Peot'-ra.
Koolic	Koo'-lic.
Slavyanski Bazaar	Slavyan'-ski Bazaar.
Nijni Novgorod	Neezh'-ni Nov-gorod.
Borogooslan	Bo'-ro-gooslan'.
Aristanti	Aristan'-tee.
Pavoska	Pavos'-ka.
Troika	Troy'-ka.
Platyonka	Platyon'-ka.
Oofa	Oofa'.
Sonika	Soni'-ka.



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